TELOS

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Table of Contents

SYMPOSIUM ON NARCISSISM

Contributions by Alt, Hearn, Jacoby, Aronowitz, Ewen, Kovel, Elshtain, Piccone, Lasch

and

TRIBUTES TO SARTRE

By Rybalka, Lévy, Rossanda, Daniel, Rousset, Geismar, Krivine, Bensaïd, Kahn, Morin, Althusser, Debray, Levinas, Trigano, Maximin, Aron, Glucksman, Piccone, Blume

Articles:
ZUKIN: *Beyond Titoism*
LÖWY: *Marcuse and Benjamin: The Romantic Dimension*
PACHTER: *Brecht's Personal Politics*

Notes:
HABERMAS: *On the German-Jewish Heritage*
JANIK: *Philosophical Sources of Wittgenstein's Ethics*
LA CAPRA: *Interpreting Sartre: Response to Collins*
COLLINS: *Reply to La Capra*

Reviews:
BENHABIB: Heller, *On Instincts* and *A Theory of Feelings*
REED: Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race*
NOVE: Konrad, Szeleny, *Intellectuals on the Road to Power*
ANTONIO: Mlynar, *Nightfrost in Prague*

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a quarterly journal of radical thought

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TELOS
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 3
Paul Piccone

ARTICLES:
Beyond Titoism 5
Sharon Zukin
Marcuse and Benjamin: The Romantic Dimension 25
Michel Löwy
Brecht's Personal Politics 35
Henry Pachter

SPECIAL SYMPOSIUM ON NARCISSISM:
The Cortland Conference on Narcissism 49
John Alt and Frank Hearn
Narcissism and the Crisis of Capitalism 58
Russell Jacoby
On Narcissism 65
Stanley Aronowitz
Mass Culture, Narcissism and the Moral Economy of War 74
Stuart Ewen
Narcissism and the Family 88
Joel Kovel
The Self: Reborn, Undone, Transformed 101
Jean Bethke Elshtain
Narcissism After the Fall: What's On the Bottom of the Pool 112
Paul Piccone
Narcissism and the Problem of "Morale" 122
Christopher Lasch

NOTES:
On the German-Jewish Heritage 127
Jürgen Habermas
Philosophical Sources of Wittgenstein's Ethics 131
Allan Janik
Interpreting Sartre: A Response to Collins 145
Dominick La Capra
Reply to La Capra 150
Douglas Collins

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO SARTRE:

Introduction 153
Michel Rybalka
Today's Hope: Conversations with Sartre 155
Benny Lévy
A Splendid Life 181
Rossana Rossanda
We Already Miss His Vigilance 184
Jean Daniel
The Drama of Political Confrontation 189
David Rousset
A Contagious Enthusiasm and Youthfulness 190
Alain Geismar
In Memory of a Rebel 193
Alain Krivine and *Daniel Bensaïd*
God, How They Hated Him! 194
Jean François Kahn
The Symbol of a Wandering 196
Edgar Morin
Our Jean-Jacques Rousseau 197
Louis Althusser
This Was an Intellectual 198
Regis Debray
A Language Familiar to Us 199
Emmanuel Levinas
A Just Man 201
Shmuel Trigano
Sartre Listening to Savages 202
Daniel Maximin
Sartre's Errors: A Discussion 204
Raymond Aron, André Glucksman, Benny Lévy, et al.
Our Sartre 208
Paul Piccone
Sartre: A Poem 210
Harvey Blume

REVIEWS:

Agnes Heller, *On Instincts*
Agnes Heller, *A Theory of Feelings* 211
Seyla Benhabib
William J. Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race* 221
Adolph Reed Jr.
George Konrad and Ivan Szeleny, *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power: A Sociological Study of the Role of Intellectuals in Socialism* 225
Alec Nove
Zdenek Mlynar, *Nightfrost in Prague: The End of Humane Socialism* 223
Robert J. Antonio

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INTRODUCTION

The collapse of the Left in the 1970s, both politically as well as theoretically, has created a vacuum in urgent need of filling. Not only have categories such as the proletariat, the party, the class, etc., gone the way of the dinosaur, but even more fundamental assumptions dealing with the nature of qualitative change, the need for a revolutionary agency, the role of the intelligentsia, the totality, etc., have come under critical fire. As Sartre put it in the very last interview prior to his death, which we publish here along with a number of tributes, the very *principles* of the Left are in need of a careful re-examination — something he promised to do, and even began to do in the *Critique*, but never satisfactorily developed. This is why the present discussion concerning narcissism goes to the heart of the problem: if advanced capitalism is actually generating a new type of individuality — the narcissistic personality — then traditional notions of politics as well as projects for social reconstruction based on them must be drastically revised.

In light of the central character of narcissism for social theory — put forth most forcefully by Christopher Lasch in his *The Culture of Narcissism* — it is not surprising that it has been received in many contradictory ways. Thus, while Jacoby elaborates it as the latest phase of the unfolding of that logic of capitalist development at work for more than a century, others see it as a *radical* development necessitating a break with traditional Marxist value, even to the point of suggesting, as Lasch and Elshtain do, a reappropriation of values historically associated with the Right. Still others, such as Aronowitz, see it as a potentially positive development, a new form of resistance on which to pin the hopes for the emancipation of those heterogeneous groups he sees as the potential constituencies for a renovated New Left. In addition to a variety of divergent perspectives on the subject, in this issue Kovel elaborates the psychiatric sources and implications of narcissism in and for the family, while Ewen describes how the narcissistic masses are effectively manipulated into dubious political projects by the culture industry and its related agencies. As Lasch himself points out, however, it is not at all clear that the narcissistic personality is still manipulable in this fashion. Since the withdrawal into an empty self, typical of the narcissistic personality, entails a growing inability to enter into meaningful social relations — both fulfilling as well as debilitating ones — even the logic of manipulation will have to change drastically to successfully deal with the new social subjects. In fact, following Habermas, it is also argued that the logic of bureaucracy itself is eventually undermined by these new developments, to the point that the very reproducibility of existing relations of domination may require the Establishment's appropriation of what hitherto have been standard Left goals — reconstitution of individuality and of organic communities, carefully planned debureaucratization, rationalization of socio-economic relations, etc. Given this truly dialectical reversal, where the Left must appropriate traditional right-wing values to uphold its *spirit* while the Right integrates Left projects and strategies in the effort to repress it, a thoroughgoing debate concerning the narcissism thesis is a necessary condition for reconstituting Left theory.

Coming a mere nine months after Marcuse's death, the loss of Sartre marks the end of an age: that of the fellow traveler and of philosophies of the third way. Desperately trying to remain faithful to the Marxist tradition while Marxists of all shades did their utmost to make that morally as well as theoretically impossible, both Marcuse and Sartre were never afraid to be constantly caught in the crossfire from the Right and the Left. Although they might have occasionally given in to the temptation of paying the unacceptable price of fellow travelers — e.g., Sartre during the early 1950s period of *The Communists and Peace* or in the populist-Maoist phase of the early 1970s, and Marcuse in the uncritical concessions of *Essay on Liberation* — they were two lighthouses that our generation always looked to for guidance in the worst political storms. While it is impossible to acknowledge their debt in any one issue, here we simply provide a series of tributes, mostly from the French, to a thinker who will continue to affect us for years to come.

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In the regular sections of the journal, Zukin examines the trajectory and prospects of Titoism in the wake of Tito's death. She also comes to the conclusion that Tito's death marks the end of the age of that peculiar phenomenon called Titoism — something made possible by a unique configuration of historical events and thus unlikely either to be repeated or promulgated in the future.

Although much has been written about Marcuse, most accounts have focused either on his recent works or, at best, on his "American" period. Carefully re-examining the entire trajectory of Marcuse's intellectual career in light of the recently republished early works, Löwy points out how Marcuse began close to Benjamin in the post-World War I context, gradually moved away from that early romantic position after he broke with Heidegger and went into his American exile, only to return to Benjamin and his early romanticism after the 1950s. Dealing with a parallel career, that of Brecht, Pachter attempts to explain how and why Brecht chose a different path and stayed within the communist movement, notwithstanding major obstacles and compromises.

In the Notes section, we publish Habermas' address to the graduating class of the New School for Social Research, in which he evalutes the German-Jewish heritage kept alive in New York during the Holocaust and after, as well as the contradictory predicament of those who carried on that tradition. In the latest contribution to the Wittgenstein debate (begun in *Telos* No. 38 by Levi, concerning whether the disastrous character of Wittgenstein's ethics was owing to his homosexuality or Jewishness), Janik explores further the Viennese intellectual context above and beyond Janik's earlier efforts in *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (co-authored with Stephen Körner). Last, and definitely least, the section closes with peripheral quibbles about interpretations of Sartre's work.

In the review section, Benhabib undertakes a long-overdue evaluation of two of Heller's recent works — something *Telos* has published in the past, but never critically discussed at length. In a similar vein, Nove takes issue with some of Konrad and Szeleny's points in *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power* — a part of which appeared in *Telos* No. 38; Reed takes apart Wilson's fashionable work about the prospects for American blacks; and Antonio examines Mlynar's brilliant but tormented biographical account of the Czech experience — an excerpt of which appeared in *Telos* No. 42.

Paul Piccone

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

A frequent **Telos** contributor, **Sharon Zukin** has written a book on Yugoslavia and teaches sociology at Brooklyn College. **Michel Löwy's** book on Lukacs has just been published in England, and he teaches social theory in Nanterre. **Henry Pachter** is a historian and essayist living in New York. **John Alt** and **Frank Hearn** teach sociology at the State University of New York at Cortland. **Russell Jacoby** has just completed a book on Western Marxism, soon to be published by Cambridge University Press. A **Telos** editor, he is now doing research on Otto Fenichel in Los Angeles. **Stanley Aronowitz** is a peripathetic scholar, now teaching in Irvine, Calif., and Columbia University, as well as several other spots in between. **Stuart Ewen** teaches communications at Hunter College in New York. **Joel Kovel,** another **Telos** editor, teaches and practices psychiatry at the Albert Einstein Medical Center in New York. **Jean Bethke Elshtain** teaches political science at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. **Christopher Lasch** teaches history at the University of Rochester. **Juergen Habermas** is director of the Max Planck Institute in Starnberg, Germany. **Allan Janik** was, at last report, teaching in Massachusetts. **Dominick La Capra** teaches history at Cornell University. **Douglas Collins** teaches French at the University of Washington. **Seyla Benhabib** is doing research at the Max Planck Institute in Starnberg. **Adolph Reed Jr.** works for the city of Atlanta, Georgia; **Alec Nove** teaches political science at the University of Glasgow; and **Robert Antonio** grows wheat as well as teaching sociology at the University of Kansas.

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BEYOND TITOISM*

by Sharon Zukin

With the death of its president and founding father, Josip Broz Tito, this May, Yugoslavia faces a time of reckoning. But the perception of this period differs among Yugoslavs and among foreigners. Outside the country, anxiety focuses on a "succession crisis," that is, the question of who will fill command power in Yugoslavia in the immediate future. This anxiety barely mutes an underlying hostility. East and West still view Yugoslavia in terms of an archetypal dual image — as both "good" communists and "bad" communists — and, understandably, neither East Europeans nor Americans and West Europeans find it easy to come to terms with the reflection of their own societies in this duality. Tito himself personified the divided image. A "rebel" against Stalin yet a democratic centralist in his own League of Communists (LC), a "liberalizer" who rejected doctrinal rigidity in favor of ideological synthesis, Tito tried to walk with both the lions (the Warsaw Pact and NATO, Comecon and the Common Market, the World Bank) and the lambs (the Nonaligned nations from 1954, the Hungarians in 1956, the Czechs in 1968). It was easier for foreigners to deal with this single representative of the good communist-bad communist duality than with the multiple personalities that they fear post-Tito Tugoslavia may bewilderingly assume.

Nevertheless, for Yugoslavs, the post-Tito crisis takes a different form. During the past few years, the last members of the revolutionary Partisan generation of leaders have slipped from the scene. The deaths of Veljko Vlahovic (whose funeral, unnoticed outside Yugoslavia, evoked genuine and affectionate grief), Edvard Kardelj, and Djuro Pucar reverberated deeply in public consciousness. The days of national mourning for their deaths punctuated a rising concern in the press (which reflected the agendas of the top political forums) with the transmission of collective identity, particularly through young people, the party, and the national-ethnic republics. Whether these social forces will become sources of continuity or discontinuity depends on their willingness to identify their self-interest with that of the whole society. Thus the succession issue that was initiated with Tito's death in 1980 symbolizes Yugoslavia's time of reckoning less than an identity crisis of "Titoism" that began years ago.

What is Titoism?

In large part, the source of the identity crisis lies in the lack of an inherent identity. The historical significance of Titoism has been strategic rather than substantive. It is an orientation toward policy rather than

*This essay presents some reflections occasioned not only by the death of Tito but by my research in Yugoslavia for several months in 1979. During that time I reformulated the conclusions of my previous work on Yugoslav socialism, *Beyond Marx and Tito* (Cambridge University Press, 1975). For the purposes of this essay, "Titoism" does not refer to Tito's personality but to the direction of Yugoslav society under his leadership.

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policies themselves. This judgment may appear strange in light of the constant projection, over the past 30 years, of a Yugoslav model or a "Yugoslav way," notably in terms of workers' self-management and market socialism. Yet, insofar as these concepts have a specific historical meaning, they refer to the compromises and reconciliations that the Yugoslav leadership have tried to work out, to their advantage, in the conditions that they have had to confront. This is a major reason why — despite Yugoslav proselytizing — workers' self-management and market socialism have not been adopted in other national settings, where political and economic leaders develop their own contextual strategies.

Basically, workers' self-management and market socialism represent non-coercive strategies of labor mobilization and capital accumulation under the political and ideological constraints of a "socialist" state. Because in its formative years Yugoslavia, for both internal and external reasons, was unable to commit the resources to build up an infrastructure of economic repression (e.g., through forced labor, collectivization of agriculture, and rigid central planning), the Yugoslav leadership developed greater flexibility than other socialist states. However, this has been the source of both strength and weakness.

On the one hand, the Yugoslavs have been able to maintain their authority without the degree of physical coercion and moral hypocrisy that generates grievance in other socialist states. On the other hand, the unintended — though hardly unanticipated — consequence of Titoism has been a dynamic growth of contradictory demands that tear at the leadership's legitimacy. In practice, Titoism was created on the basis of continual trade-offs between the formal ideological premise of any socialist state, i.e., equity, and the state's ability to promote the material conditions in which that premise may be realized. Thus, Titoism derives from a series of strategic trade-offs between equity and efficiency. What is fundamentally problematic about Titoism is the double dénouement of this historic compromise: the inability to use force, in the normal course of events, to guarantee "socialist solidarity" and the reluctance to accept, unless pressed, the uncertainty of outcome of democratic institutions. But the leadership does derive certain benefits from the situation. First, the increasing decentralization of all political and economic units suggests a deliberate fragmentation so that the center may exercise the only effective control. Second, when for all practical purposes self-management is equated with self-financing, it also serves as a means of non-coercive — or rather self-coercive — control. So, from the Yugoslav leadership's point of view, Titoism squares the circle that all socialist states confront: it reconciles self-interest with the general interest in the most efficient manner.

In no sense can this reconciliation be considered either permanent or cheap. Any attempt to institutionalize it, e.g., in the "self-managing" communes and work units ("basic organizations of associated labor" or OALs), creates a social space that becomes an arena of confrontation between groups with conflicting objective interests — an arena, in other

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words, of "class struggle." Within the commune and OAL, social inequities generate groupings that compete for those compensations that the commune and workplace can provide: power, status, collective goods (in the commune), and wages and fringe benefits (in the OAL). In the larger society, the commune and the OAL — and their amalgamations, i.e., the republics and the enterprises (or "complex organizations of associated labor") — compete. They compete for the capital (in the form of state subsidies, domestic and foreign investments and loans) that will create jobs, which are, in a socialist state, a source of both power and legitimacy. Whether the resolutions of particular struggles take on a "capitalist" or a "socialist" character does not depend on any inherent (or inferred) nature of the institutions that are created. Rather, these institutions merely provide a framework for political and economic coordination (especially capital accumulation and labor mobilization) according to the long-term and short-term priorities of the leadership. It is important to remember that self-management institutions as well as market mechanisms are not autonomous of this leadership. These institutions do not *substitute* for the state. They *supplement* the state by providing both flexibility and control.[1]

However, the use of self-management and markets also imposes costs. If these institutions really work — that is, if they fulfill their supposed functions, with the self-management organs really making decisions and the market mechanisms really making allocations — then they develop an authority that competes with the state's. This possibility requires the state, or the political leadership, to maintain control over these institutions by various means: (1) setting limits to the policy that the institutions can effect,[2] (2) instituting personnel checks through nomination and verification of people who are elected to leading positions in self-management organs;[3] (3) stimulating these leaders as well as economic managers to emphasize the political credentials that are so necessary to their careers over the commitment that they might feel to their nominal constituencies in the local community or the workplace;[4] and (4) reorganizing the lines of authority, so

1. Thus, both partisans and critics of self-management and market socialism are in error for failing to take account of the fact that it is political priorities that establish and reorganize these institutions rather than these institutions that set political priorities. A "self-managing" or a "market" society is a *tabula rasa* until it is implemented by a particular state in specific circumstances. So it is nonsense to talk, on the one hand, about the possibility that self-management implies the "withering away" of the state. Only in the realm of ideology do these things occur; in the real world no one supposes that they do. See my note, "The Paris Conference on Self-management," *Telos,* no. 34 (Winter, 1977-78), pp. 148-57; and Svetozar Stojanovic, "The Possibility of Socialist Democratization in Yugoslavia," *Telos,* no. 41 (Fall, 1979), pp. 76-86.

2. Hence the realization, on the part of some Yugoslavs, that domestic markets are only partially effective and that enterprises, work organizations, and republics never gain control over all the financial means that might conceivably be placed at their disposal in a decentralized system. Just as markets are blocked, at some points, by the state, so self-management is similarly constrained by the state's fiscal policy, e.g., taxation and pricing, and investment policy, e.g., subsidies.

3. This sort of information — not so well known as the Soviet-style *nomenklatura* nor so exhaustive a control — is not available for public consumption, but the Yugoslavs are aware of it.

4. Hence, the continual carping on the vigilance of all individual LC members, *viz.* Edvard

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that they dissolve constituencies that develop a coherent set of interests and an emergent leadership into increasingly amorphous bodies where it is more difficult to articulate a single set of interests other than the state's and the party's.[5]

Costs and Benefits

Because it is impossible to eliminate the constituencies' interests and leadership without invoking the coercive strategies that the Yugoslavs have foresworn, controlling self-management institutions and market mechanisms imposes high organizational costs on the state and the party. First, there are the procedural and financial costs of Yugoslavia's continual institutional reorganizations. These involve rewriting laws and charters, electing representavies of redefined jurisdictions and competences, and aligning new juridical and political forms with old content. On the basis of newspaper articles on the establishment of all the institutions and the ratification of all the laws connected with the "delegate system" that appeared between 1972 and 1980, it can be estimated that it takes at least five years merely to go through all the formal changes. The time that is required to familiarize a population of over 20 million Yugoslavs with new forms and procedures, as well as to mobilize them according to their new rights and responsibilities, also imposes organizational costs: loss of clarity, confusion, and impatience.[6]

Another type of organizational cost that is imposed by the leadership's strategies of non-coercive control involves the necessity of trying to maintain a high level of mobilization among a great number of activists without necessarily politicizing them for or against a particular target. In the official idiom, this type of mobilization relies on "consciousness" or willingness to "struggle" on the part of LC members. Yet, increasingly, if not even

Kardelj, *Pravci razvoja politickog sistema socijalistickog samoupravljanja* (Belgrade: Komunist, 1978), pp. 215-24.

5. In this light, the reorganization of self-management institutions during the 1970s, with "delegations" sent from work organizations and citizens' groups to assemblies of "self-managing interest communities" (SICs), as well as an increased reliance on small public meetings (the "assemblies of working people") in the OAL, appear as attempts to circumvent the power bases that developed in the commune assembly and the workers' council. Thus, Kardelj's innovative idea (in the Yugoslav context) of institutionalizing a "pluralism of interests" is obfuscating at least and manipulative at most. Needless to say, this sort of observation is regarded as heretical in Yugoslavia. See Kardelj, *Pravci razvoja*; and Mladen Lazic, "Pluralizam i jedinstvo samoupravnih interesa," *Kulturni radnik* 31, no. 2 (1978), pp. 22-37.

6. Various critical Yugoslav social scientists have pointed out the enormous amount of paperwork (especially the number of laws) that is generated by reorganization and state intervention without considering, however, whether the complexity of the economy or the society requires at least some increase in state activity. See Neca Jovanov's remarks in the symposium, "Aktuelna pitanja teorije i prakse proizvodno-poslovnog ponasanja samoupravnih robnih proizvodjaca," *Marksisticka misao*, no. 6 (1978), pp. 65,67, and Branko Horvat, *Privredni ciklusi u Jugoslaviji* (Belgrade: Institut ekonomskih nauka, 1969), pp. 102 ff. By the same token, these reorganizations result in an overall increase in the number of white-collar workers in the civil-service bureaucracies and in the enterprise departments that are responsible for overseeing compliance with state laws. Given the high rate of unemployment, this may not be totally disfunctional. Indeed, the passage of the 1974 Federal Constitution and the 1976 Law on Associated Labor helped lawyers, who at the time suffered from under-employment.

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originally from 1949 or 1950, the leadership's renunciation of coercion in favor of self-interest makes the call to consciousness or struggle sound outmoded.[7] Self-management and the market are not symbolically consistent with the existence of "class enemies." So the leadership's pragmatic legitimacy suffers from the implicit comparison. Such idiomatic mobilization also takes its toll within the party through a decline in membership, particularly among the working-class members; a loss of conceptual clarity; and a confusion among party members about what the party line really is.[8]

This type of mobilization also entails an organizational cost because it emphasizes that the party, in contrast to self-management institutions and market mechanisms, exercises the most repressive functions in the society. Significantly, the vigilance of the LC members is explicitly directed toward containing conflict at the base of society — in the work units and communes — before it can erupt in social disturbances, especially strikes, and spread to other local milieux.[9] In fact, the outcome of every significant work stoppage in Yugoslavia includes the dismissal of the directors and the party officials in the offending enterprise. Although in such cases the top leadership obviously considers the local party activists insufficiently "conscious" of their duties, the task of containment is clearly perceived by non-members. Surely this imposes some strain both among the members and between the organization and the milieu that it is supposed to control.

Official ideology seeks to establish the benefits rather than the costs of Titoism. In particular, it places the continual reorganization of institutions and the collective vigilance of LC members in the context of Yugoslavia's "increasing democratization." On the one hand, all the elections that are required to fill the many "delegations" and other committees supposedly

7. See, e.g., Svetozar Stojanovic's "Revolutionary Teleology and Ethics," in *Between Ideals and Reality,* trans. Gerson S. Sher (Oxford University Press, 1973).

8. Despite efforts, particularly since 1971, to recruit workers into the LC, the majority of members remain bureaucrats, managers, and white-collar workers. Confusion among LC members about the official line is documented in an unpublished study by Andjelka Milic et al., *Ideoloska svest i angazovanost SK Srbije* (Belgrade: Institut drustvenih nauka, 1979). Or, for example, in a survey of about 1000 workers in Croatia, over a third of the respondents who were party members both accepted and rejected the proposition that "Politics is only for politicians." Zdenka Gjankovic et al., *Kulturni standard radnicke klase Zagreba* (Zagreb: Zavod za kulturu Hrvatske, 1978). In an essay in the Sunday *Politika* that struck me, at the time, as expressing some of the dominant themes of official discourse, a Yugoslav wrote, "Practice here already shows that the more developed and the more democratic self-management is, the question of power crops up less and less and the question of consciousness occurs more and more." (Dragoljub Milivojevic, "Borba za svest," *Politika'*, June 3, 1979). The context indicates that the writer considers this a progressive development.

9. For example, in an interview the president of the Central Committee of the Slovenian LC says, "We're organized so that we resolve every problem 'on the spot'" (*Politika,* July 16, 1979). Similarly, veteran politician Dr. Vladimir Bakaric expresses dismay that the vast increase in strikes in Croatian enterprises during the first half of 1979 was not "foreseen" by the self-management bodies, and he emphasizes the significance of having an LC branch in every work unit (*Politika,* July 15, 1979). In Serbia also, the LC Central Committee criticizes the LC branches "and above all their secretaries...who in some places are in a posture of irresponsibility for the situation in their own milieu" (*Politika,* July 13, 1979). The orchestration of comment in every republic emphasizes the importance that the leadership ascribes to this type of control.

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demonstrate "direct democracy." In reality, these delegates are named in indirect elections, and the content of the delegations' work is circumscribed by political controls and fiscal limitations. On the other hand, the combativeness that all LC members are supposed to show in their grassroots activism supposedly compensates democratically for the party's renunciation of a "directing" role in favor of a "guiding" role in society. These characterizations (i.e., "direct" rather than "bourgeois" democracy, and a "guiding" rather than a "leading" role), as well as the relatively subtle controls that they embody, are consistent with Titoism as it has developed since 1952.[10]

But besides imposing organizational costs, this line of development also creates ideological dissonance. More significant, perhaps, than confusion over the difference between elections in self-management and in liberal democracy, or between the unobtrusive vs. the ruling party, is the discrepancy between equity and efficiency. In a basically inequitable situation, neither self-management institutions nor market mechanisms can redistribute resources to beef up the weak and restrain the strong.[11] In Yugoslavia, as class distinctions deepen, the standard of living in developed republics and regions remains qualitatively different from life in underdeveloped areas, and successful work associations maintain a lead over less profitable business enterprises, the market becomes identified with efficacy while self-management becomes identified with equity.[12] Thus, self-

10. Kardelj, as always, made the necessary ideological formulations. See *Pravci razvoja*. For an analysis of the evolution of political controls with reference to labor unions, see my "Workers' Self-management Without a Working Class: The Role of Yugoslav Labor Unions" (forthcoming).

11. Their inability to do so is documented by every objective analysis of Yugoslav political economy, although the authors of otherwise insightful studies persist in criticizing or finding reasons for *their inefficacy* rather than analyzing *the political and economic context* in which they are utilized as relatively efficient strategies of labor mobilization and capital accumulation. See, for example, Antonio Carlo, who blames the market and both pities and praises self-management, "Capitalist Restoration and Social Crisis in Yugoslavia," *Telos*, no. 36 (Summer, 1978), pp. 81-110, and Ellen Comisso, who both praises and blames self-management but pities the market, *Workers' Control Under Plan and Market: Implications of Yugoslav Self-management* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979). *Mea culpa* too (in Part!) in *Beyond Marx and Tito: Theory and Practice in Yugoslav Socialism* (Cambridge University Press, 1975).

12. The most thorough recent study of the reproduction of class differences is Mihailo Popovic et al., *Drustveni slojevi i drustvena svest* (Belgrade: Institut drustvenih nauka, 1977), particularly the chapter by Vesna Pesic. On differences between developed and underdeveloped regions, see any statistical yearbook published by the Savezni zavod za statistiku (SZS). Systematic data on enterprise losses are hard to come by. For example, in the first quarter of 1978, "uncleared losses" (i.e., deficits that could not be covered by subsidies from the state or loans from other work organizations) remained from 1977 in over 2,000 OALs, employing almost 400,000 workers (out of a total Yugoslav work force of almost 5 million); these losses amounted to almost 15 million dinars (about $1 million). Around 80% of these losses were incurred in the economic sector, far fewer in the non-economic sector. In the economy as a whole, the level of losses increased by 18% between 1977 and 1978 but by only 9% between 1978 and 1979. Losses aggregated by republic also confirm the continued uneven levels of development. Between 1977 and 1978, losses in Slovenia (the most industrialized republic) declined, losses in Croatia increased by only 8%, losses in Montenegro (one of the least developed republics) increased by half, and losses in the Serbian heartland and Macedonia almost doubled. Data from the Sluzba drustvenog knjigovodstva reprinted in *Politika*, April 6, 1979, and *Sindikati*, no. 6 (1978), pp. 107-09.

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management is blamed for pushing a degree of income equality ("uravnilovka") that jeopardizes efficiency. (That is, the lack of sufficient material stimuli — *viz.* income differentials — jeopardizes the productivity that is needed for economic growth and the capital accumulation that would finance investment, etc.) Similarly, market mechanisms are made the scapegoat for a zealous pursuit of self-interest that jeopardizes equity. (That is, "socialist millionaires," in Tito's phrase, or a "faction of the [Yugoslav] bourgeoisie," in the words of a recent critic, who profit by the market-oriented reforms of the 1960s jeopardize the equality on which socialist society depends.)[13] Given this ideological overlay, as well as the real possibilities for social action that are open to them, Yugoslavs try to use self-management institutions as substantive rather than procedural mechanisms, or as redistributive rather than productive means.[14] When they get no satisfaction from the self-management organs, they go to the state. As workers' councils, they go to the state for subsidies; as workers, they go to the state for wage payments. This is indeed state intervention. But in contrast to other socialist states, the intervention in these cases is predominantly neither pre-emptive nor punitive. So, all things considered, Titoism does present a relatively efficient way of exercising socialist-state power.

Nevertheless, as the Yugoslav leaders have recognized publicly for the past 10 years, Titoism's unresolved tensions generate conflict. Because of the ideological overlay, public discussion of these conflicts is often confusing. Thus Yugoslav politics joins strange bedfellows, particularly when technocrats join manual workers in criticizing the banks as "centers of power," and bureaucrats in the party criticize bureaucrats in the state. To illustrate some of the conceptual and real confusion that underlies Titoist strategies of capital accumulation and labor mobilization, we can briefly consider what I call "The Means Issue" and "The Wage Phenomenon."

The Means Issue

The Means Issue arises because people use self-management institutions to compete with the state over control of capital accumulation, particularly over who will have the responsibility to generate savings and who will have the right to allot or invest them. In global terms, this competition pits the work organizations or ZOALs against Yugoslav banks (which operate on a profit basis like any other OAL) and the state. The major share of income created in Yugoslavia — or two-thirds of GNP — is generated by work organizations in the economic (i.e., the productive) sector. Yet banks, which

13. See Luka Markovic, *Klasna borba i koncepcije razvoja* (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1978), which extends Tito's criticism as well as that of the *Praxis* group from the mid- to late-sixties, and also borrows from Lukacs and Poulantzas.

14. Even among LC members, self-management is perceived as a goal rather than a means. In the 1979 survey of Serbian LC members, 43% of the respondents said that the party's role in society should be to create the conditions for real self-management in the interests of the working class and all working people (Milic et al., *Ideoloska svest*). As attention focuses more and more on "the conditions for real self-management," class interests become vaguer and vaguer. Comisso, *Workers' Control,* chapter 8, makes the point that in the factory she studied in Zagreb, the blue-collar workers viewed self-management as a set of substantive goals and the executives viewed it as a set of procedural norms.

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husband enterprise deposits as well as foreign and state credits, derive power — as in a capitalist society — from their lending capacity. The state, primarily in the local governments (communes and republics), has an interest in directing this lending capacity to their territory in order to create or protect jobs. Thus in contrast to the planned economies of other socialist states, where regional managers have to lobby only with the central state apparatus, Yugoslav communes and republics also have to lobby with the banks. Since both OALs and communes or republics are supposed to be self-financing, the question of who accumulates and who allots capital — the OALs, the banks, or the state — readily becomes acute. In economic terms, of course, this question refers to the circulation and utilization of capital, how different agents of circulation affect its use, how the use affects the rate of profit, and what the process implies about the realistic possibilities of self-financing. In Yugoslavia, the dominant ideology structures these issues in terms of The Means Issue.

In the way the official ideology interprets the labor theory of value, the "means" (i.e., the capital) that are "realized" or generated by the producers should remain in the hands of those producers. But in practice, money flows from the work organizations to the banks and the state, so that the nominally self-managing (and hypothetically self-financing) OALs have to appeal to the banks and the state for help in making investments. The dependence on bank financing of small- and medium-size companies, which rarely stirs controversy in a capitalist economy, becomes controversial in a self-managing society. Moreover, in the case of liquidity crisis or financial loss (i.e., cash-flow or deficit problems), the OALs apply for loans to meet their payroll. The susceptibility of the banks to grant these loans, which would not occur in a capitalist economy, becomes controversial because of Yugoslav claims to use market mechanisms. Apart from the ideological discourse about "means" and producers, the concrete terms of discussion in Yugoslavia concern interest rates, taxation, and the growth of state and quasi-state bureaucracies.

Despite the exigencies of self-financing, Yugoslav work organizations have continually reduced the proportion of net income that they allot to "expanded reproduction" or re-investment in expanding their productive facilities. At the same time, they have raised their expenditures on wages and debt service. Between 1977 and 1978, interest payments in the economy increased by 42%. They had increased by 22% between 1976 and 1977 and by 36% between 1975 and 1976. In 1975-76 the work organizations financed only 4-5% of their re-investment, and by 1979 the authoritative business weekly *Ekonomska politika* said, in passing, that practically no work organization built any investment object with its own funds.[15] Normally, capitalist rationality suggests that borrowing money to pay for fixed capital is more advantageous than self-financing out of reserve funds. But enterprises in a socialist economy — without equity financing — literally cannot

15. "Primena ZUR u medjusobnim ekonomskim odnosima OOUR koje sticu dohodak ucescem u zajednickom dohotku," *Sindikati*, no. 1 (1978); *Ekonomska politika*, May 21, 1979, p. 19; *Politika*, April 6, 1979; Neca Jovanov, unpublished data.

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afford the high interest rates that a continual demand for loan funds creates. On the one hand, the economic costs of borrowing cannot always be passed on in the form of higher prices; on the other hand, the political and ideological costs involve acknowledging the sway of capital markets and the power of lending institutions. Nevertheless, Yugoslav market mechanisms have permitted banks to become the largest source of investment capital in the economy. In 1961, banks provided less than 1% of all enterprise expenditures, but by 1971, they provided over half. The reorganization of self-management institutions in the early seventies reduced the banks' investment role slightly. (In 1972, the banks were down to providing only 43% of enterprise funds.) However, this trend seems to have been turned around by 1976, when the banks again began to increase their share of enterprise financing.[16]

The work organizations regard this situation as inequitable. In marked contrast to the average OAL in the productive sector, Yugoslav banks constitute the most profitable area in the economy. Their annual increase in gross income is two to three times higher than the economy as a whole. Moreover, the difference between interest rates on bank loans and interest rates on enterprise savings accounts in the banks — which constitute the major form of "investment" outside of self-investment or consolidation with another OAL that the work organizations are permitted — strikes the enterprises as intolerable. Nor do the production OALs appreciate the banks' "businesslike" lending criteria. Enterprise investments rely primarily on short-term loans that carry high interest rates. (While the legal maximum rate is around 12%, the usurious going rate is said to be as high as 24%.) To judge from the OALs' complaints, the banks refuse to grant them better loan conditions.[17] But the banks also operate under the pressure of international lending criteria. They have a dual relation with the foreign investors and international credit agencies that Yugoslavia courts. First, the banks derive income from administering the foreign credits. So they have an interest in continuing to generate this sort of indebtedness. At the same time, in order to maintain Yugoslav's credit-worthiness, they have to pressure the OALs toward austerity and to contribute to repaying the debts.[18]

Just as Yugoslav work organizations feel harassed by the banks, so they also resent paying taxes to the state. This resentment may be intensified by

16. SDK data from Jovanov, unpublished, and Dusan Bilandzic, *Historija SFR Jugoslavije* (Zagreb: Skolska knjiga, 1978), p. 403.

17. "Odbor za saziv i pripremu II kongresa samoupravljaca Jugoslavije," *Saopstenja radnih organizacija* (Belgrade, 1970), t. 2; also "Primena ZUR," and "Financijski kapital protiv samoupravljanja," *Kulturni radnik* 24, no. 4 (1971), pp. 3-39.

18. Yugoslavia is the fifth largest debtor to the World Bank. In 1979 it owed a hard-currency debt of $13 billion, $600 million of which will come due by 1983. Yugoslav work organizations also actively seek foreign investment. In 1978, Beobanka (in Belgrade) derived 13% of its lending capacity from domestic and foreign loans (as opposed to 12% from the deposits of work organizations and others and 9% from individual foreign-currency accounts). See *Ekonomska politika*, May 21, 1979; *Politika*, July 15, 1979; *New York Times*, September 24, 1979; Branislav Colanovic, "Joint Investments in Yugoslavia," *Socialist Thought and Practice* 19, no. 10 (October 1979), pp. 44-52.

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the state's claim to have abandoned the exactions that are typical of traditional states — in favor of self-managing communes and enterprises. So for ideological and political reasons, data on tax rates are hard to come by. Some data from the mid-seventies on the distribution of gross income in the economy as a whole suggest that payments for "legal obligations," i.e., taxes, including the payroll tax, take up one-fifth to one-quarter of the gross income of all OALs and are rising slightly. Other statements are contradictory or confusing. At the II Congress of self-managers in 1971, for example, a representative from the Adriatic shipbuilding yards (in Croatia) complained that after the market reforms of 1965, when taxes were lowered to 30%, the enterprise's tax rate really rose from 34 to 48.5% (1966-70). In 1978, the newsweekly *NIN* reported that a factory in Sabac (in Serbia) paid 46% of its gross income in taxes, which represented a 43% increase from the year before. At the same time, according to the daily *Vjesnik*, a factory in Zagreb (in Croatia) paid 12% of its gross income in taxes and 52% of its payroll in taxes. Because decentralization and self-financing have raised the OALs' expectations, such tax rates are regarded as unreasonably high. Furthermore, the increasing social expenditures of state and quasi-state bodies — for social services, municipal services, and retirement benefits, to cite the most significant and growing budget areas — encourage disbelief that the means left in the hands of the work organizations will ever increase.

To defuse this issue, the organizational reforms of the early 1970s created new self-management institutions that would channel funds from production into social welfare expenditures without seeming to involve a state apparatus. Certainly the federal state, in the aftermath of the 1971-72 nationality disputes, wished to decentralize state spending as far as possible. The "self-managing interest communities" (SICs) that were adopted in the early seventies have been established on a totally decentralized basis. In 1975, for example, as they were being organized throughout the country, there were 3,400 SICs, half of which had been formed that year, almost half the year before, and a small number in 1973.[19] The reason for this variation in time is that the SICs are not established by state legislation, especially not on any central level. Rather, they are organized by agreement — or "self-managing contracts" — between representatives of the work organizations and citizens whose taxes — or "contributions" — pay for the services that they provide. Each SIC deals with delivery of a particular type of service. So in 1975, the largest number of SICs (almost 500) were set up to deal with civil defense, followed by culture, preschool and elementary school facilities, housing, and physical culture (around 400 SICs each). Contributions are determined and delivery of services is controlled by representatives — or "delegates" — from each of the constituent "delegations," i.e., the OALs and the citizens in the commune. The SIC as a whole is called an "interest group" because the delegations share the same "interest" in schools, housing, and so on. Service is provided by the staff that the SIC delegate assemblies hire, and there lies the rub: while unemployment rises

19. SZS, *Statisticki bilten*, no. 1040 (1977).

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in the economy, there has been an increase in SIC-financed personnel that one Yugoslav social scientist calls "geometric."[20] Because the demand for these services will not abate and the federal government still seems committed to the organizational principle of decentralization, we can assume that both the number of SICs and the number of their employees will continue to increase. Through the expansion in their areas of competence, their financing in the form of compulsory levies (or voluntary "contributions"), and their bureaucratic organization, the SICs become, in essence, a quasi-state body. Certainly this method of dealing with collective goods is consistent with the self-management strategy. But in reality the SICs transfer the burden of fiscal crisis from the central state to local levels, from the state to the producers. This may reformulate but it does not eliminate The Means Issue.

While the communes may take their lumps over this manner of handling taxation, they intervene in the process of capital accumulation so as to derive some benefits. The commune intervenes in three crucial ways. First, on a formal level, the commune assembly (i.e., the legislature) is required to participate in all inter-enterprise negotiations and contracts. Because these contracts govern all business relations, from pricing the exchange of products to bankruptcy claims and loans, the commune is thus involved in an essentially corporatist approach to economic coordination.[21]

Second, the commune exerts informal pressure on banks in its jurisdiction to invest in nearby work organizations. While the banks directly control their investment funds (subject to the participation of outside directors, in line with the 1970's reorganizations), the commune assembly has some indirect influence because of the legislation it can pass that affects banking; its "partnership" (*partnerstvo*) in all contracts that the bank, like any other OAL, has to negotiate in order to do business; and the rate of taxation or contributions that the commune-based SICs set. Commune political leaders may also lobby for "their" banks in higher forums, on the republic or federal level. Like any local government, the commune's interest in affecting investment policy is to protect jobs. To stretch out the financial resources that are available, the communes prefer to subsidize economic activities that need little capital investment. not only do they then get more jobs for their (or the banks' or the OALs') money, but they also retain greater control over the subsidies. The moneys involved are smaller, hence easier to oversee. They can keep the sources of small amounts of capital (as well as the resulting profits or losses) highly localized. Their official reports to higher forums can maximize the number of economic objects that they have encouraged in their territory. In this manner plenty of "irrational" investment decisions are made, decisions that do not take account of unsold inventory, world market prices, excess capacity, and the duplication of resources. However, the priority of keeping or even increasing the number of jobs and OALs in the commune makes commune officials press the banks to make

20. Neca Jovanov in "Aktuelna pitanja," p. 59.

21. Besides the communes, the other "partners" (as the Yugoslavs call them) are the OALs themselves and their labor union branches. For the significance of the labor unions' participation, see my "Workers' Self-management."

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loans to failing enterprises, to smaller OALs rather than the larger enterprises that might be expected to generate a higher rate of return on investment in bigger projects, and to non-productive instead of industrial activities.[22]

The third way that the communes intervene in capital accumulation is that officials offer personal guarantees to the banks for loans to OALs. Neca Jovanova claims to have studied 29,000 separate investment decisions worth 600 billion dinars and to have found that most of them were guaranteed by either commune or high federal officials. Similarly, the president of Jugobanka, the largest Yugoslav bank, has criticized the politicization of investment decisions as too "temperamental." Indeed, he and other top bankers call for a return to planning to cure the irrationality that this induces in the economy. But the present level and manner of state intervention in the process of accumulation makes the commune government "the real investor," as *Ekonomska politika* says, in the economy.[23]

Banks feel aggrieved by this situation. So do the largest OALs, the more profitable OALs, and industrial OALs in general because they figure that they are subsidizing, in effect, small firms, failing firms, and firms in the non-productive sector. They also feel deprived of the investment funds that they need to finance big projects. In this sense, another by-product of commune intervention angers them even further. This is the extreme localization, or as the Yugoslavs call it the "territorialization," of investment. During the 1970s, only about 3% of all investments in Yugoslavia were made across republic borders and only 15% were made outside the commune.[24] This pattern precludes the development of an expensive, all-Yugoslav infrastructure (e.g., electricity grids, highways, and railroad lines) from which the more industrially advanced OALs could be expected to profit most. Although that might enhance economic growth rates for the country as a whole — which is obviously a priority of the central state — it would impose costs on the local governments.

What might some of these costs be? First, the lion's share of Yugoslavia's limited capital would be committed, for a number of years, to building the infrastructure rather than to local investment objects that would yield immediate benefits. Second, the expansion of large industrial firms from well-established industrial centers across republic borders, especially into the less-developed republics and regions, carries with it the usual probability of industrial decentralization: loss of jobs in the old centers, development of a cheap labor market in the new areas. Third, banks might be able to use the new situation to justify refusing loans to small and failing OALs, and this time the top political leadership might support them. The ensuing flight of capital would finalize the communes' loss of control over job-creation and job-retention. So any way they figure it, the commune governments have a stake in protecting decentralization. Similarly, for its own self-interest, regardless of either self-management or market socialism, the state has a

22. See "Aktuelna pitanja," especially pp. 17, 43, 62.

23. Jovanov in "Aktuelna pitanja," p. 61; "Investicije: Zaposljavanje kao motiv i kriterijum," *Ekonomska politika*, May 21, 1979.

24. "Teritorijalna pokretljivost radnika," *Sindikati*, no. 4 (1978), pp. 109-25.

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reason to prevent the formation of a full-scale capital market.[25]

To summarize before going on, the contradictions of the Titoist strategy of capital accumulation, which is constrained by self-management institutions and market mechanisms as well as by the economic commitments and political priorities of the state on all levels, appear in full strength in The Means Issue. These contradictions shape perceptions and behavior on the part of both institutions and individuals. They structure the partial resolutions that are affected by investment and fiscal policy. In particular, interest rates, taxation, and the growth of state and quasi-state bodies become issues in Yugoslav politics because of the real contradictions that develop when a socialist state tries to practice the labor theory of value in an unplanned economy. As I have suggested, this situation creates strange political alliances. The banks call for state intervention in the form of planning, as in modern market societies, to "rationalize" the economy. The communes subsidize unprofitable enterprises, as in an "irrational" centrally-planned economy. Finally, the directors of large firms as well as Marxist social critics and most blue-collar workers demand that the "means" be returned to the "hands" that create them.

The Wage Phenomenon

Because the amount of "means" that are generated depends on the productivity of both capital and labor, strategies of capital accumulation are closely connected with strategies of labor mobilization. The Titoist strategy of labor mobilization depends on two factors: material incentives and incorporation of the work force into managerial functions. Still embryonic in Yugoslavia's etatist period (1946-1954), these techniques eventually developed into market socialism and workers' self-management as we know them today. Despite the benchmarks of the 1965 economic reforms, in the former case, and the 1950 law on the introduction of workers' councils, in the latter, these techniques were used in tandem in Yugoslav factories as early as 1946. But that does not imply that their development was either predetermined or uncomplicated. Indeed, until the mid-1950s (*after* the introduction of workers' self-management), the Yugoslavs continued to use Soviet-style methods of labor control, including shock workers (*udarnici*), competitions (*takmicenje*), and production brigades. However, once the leadership chose a relatively non-coercive strategy of labor mobilization over the Soviet model, they generated conditions in which the phenomenon of wages came increasingly to express underlying contradictions in the system. Wages in Yugoslavia are not merely a means to an end. They are also a symbol, a slogan, a social goal, and an individual preoccupation.[26]

25. This important point is missed by those critics who flail against "the market" in Yugoslavia. Sociologist Josip Zupanov has been one of the first and most consistent observers to indicate this, in "Neke dileme u vezi s robnonovcanim odnosima," *Praxis* 5, no. 1-2 (1968), pp. 165-69, and his forthcoming essay in *Pogledi*.

26. This brief statement is based on a major part of my research on the historical development of labor mobilization in Yugoslavia, which involved careful reading of a sample of issues of the authoritative political daily *Borba* every year from 1946 to 1965. I have checked

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Wages have this representational latitude in Yugoslavia because the Titoist strategy is so flexible. First, self-management permits the reconciliation — at least ideologically — of wage labor with de-alienation. Work may be measured in pieces or hours, but the fact that the workers themselves decide how much their work is worth is supposed to preclude labor from becoming a commodity. Then, the leadership's decision to let the price of labor vary according to the interaction of different markets got them out of some of the most serious difficulties that underlie the irrationality of a Soviet-style planned economy.[27] The state's further withdrawal from the administrative prices and subsidies that are typical of Soviet planning naturally emphasized the economic functions of wages. To live, especially to live well, in Yugoslavia requires that a great deal of time be spent in making money. But the political and ideological preoccupation with wages in Yugoslavia derives from the leadership's insistence on the virtues of self-financing. In the work organizations, much of the content of self-management relates to wage policy and wage-rates (e.g., debate over the *pravilnik*). In the society as a whole, real discussion of economic priorities is sublimated in debate over an incomes policy and over the criteria by which work should be measured and rewarded.[28]

Basically, the Yugoslavs face three dilemmas relating to The Wage Phenomenon. First, they have to maintain aggregate demand in order to sell their products domestically, given difficulties in selling them on the world market; but they also have to restrain the spending that contributes to their chronically high rate of inflation (over 20% in 1979-80). Second, they have to stimulate labor productivity (especially that of those highly skilled workers and executives who are already most highly paid); but they also have to restrain income differences, which are a sensitive political issue. Third, they have to permit people to earn an adequate wage; but they also have to limit all expenditures that detract from the work organizations' capacity for capital accumulation. In light of the socialist state's commitment to both equity and efficiency, this is not a simple bill of goods.

So Yugoslavs devote a lot of energy — both institutional and individual — to the issue of wages. Opinion surveys from 1968 through 1978 consistently show that wages occupy first place in people's concerns.[29] (Significantly, this indicates a change from the pre-economic reform period; until 1962, wages were in a much lower place in the respondents' "value hierarchy.") They make their concern felt in the self-management organs in their OAL. Because concern about wages transcends class boundaries, blue-collar workers, white-collar workers, and managers are all capable of pressing the workers' council to decide on a raise. Indeed, the universal susceptibility of

my inferences with Yugoslavs, including a number of social scientists. Needless to say, my interpretation remains my own.

27. On these difficulties, see Wlodzimierz Brus, *The Market in a Socialist Economy* (London: Routledge and Kegan, Paul, 1972), pp. 70 ff., and Aron Katsenelinboigen, *Studies in Soviet Economic Planning* (White Plains, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1978), pp. 134 ff.

28. For the labor unions' role in these debates, especially over an incomes policy, see, again, my "Workers' Self-management."

29. Fikreta Bahtijarevic-Siber, "Motivacijski aspekt raspodjele osobnih dohodaka," *Nase teme* 23 (1979), p. 300.

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workers' councils to demands for raises accounts for a continuously increasing allotment of OAL income to the "wage fund." Along with the debt service that I have already discussed, payroll expenses represent the fastest growing area of enterprise expenditures. For example, the share of net income that all BOALs pay out in wages increased from 64.8% in 1971 to 72.7% in 1976. In the energy and petrochemical industries, which have generally paid higher wages than less profitable industrial branches, the percentage of net income that goes into wages is higher: 76% in 1977 and 78% in 1978. The general director of *Crvena zastava*, the expanding Yugoslav automobile industry, reports an even higher though somewhat different figure. He says that 96% of Zastava's net income goes into wages and fringe benefits. This apparent profligacy with wage funds stirs a great deal of criticism from the political leadership because it diminished the money available for capital accumulation.[30]

Besides raises, there are also non-institutional, and only semi-legitimate, ways that Yugoslavs increase their wages. One of these ways is through strikes. Never legalized though increasing enormously in frequency, Yugoslav strikes center overwhelmingly on wage issues. Neca Jovanov's authoritative study of strikes in Yugoslavia from 1958 to 1969 shows that low wages were the major grievance in almost 27% of the 503 strikes in which a reason could be ascertained for striking. Another 26% of the strikes concerned wage-rates and wage standards (i.e., the calculation and the distribution of wages). In addition, 15% of the strikes in this period occurred when paydays were indefinitely postponed. Although Jovanov's study has not been updated, and the issue of strikes remains sensitive politically, the very partial data that appear in the press indicate that a great many strikes still occur in response to wage problems, particularly in OALs that are running in the red. The ultimate cause of enterprise deficits may be poor management, world market prices, or state policy regarding prices or tariffs or imports — all of which the work force in an OAL is frequently well aware of — but the issue does not seem to provoke a work stoppage unless and until wage security is threatened.[31]

Overtime work also represents a semi-legitimate though widespread means for Yugoslavs to increase their income. As recently as 1974, the Congress of the national Labor Union Federation condemned overtime for "exhausting

30. "Aktuelna pitanja," in *Politika*, April 6 and July 16, 1979, p. 44.

31. Neca Jovanov, *Radnicki strajkovi u SFRJ* (Belgrade: ZAPIS, 1979), pp. 153, 162, 165. Carlo, "Capitalist Restoration," p. 101, is right in suggesting that the context of strikes changed from the etatist system prior to the early 1960s, when economic conditions were set centrally by the state, to the market system inaugurated in the mid-sixties, when state policy affected wages indirectly, through setting prices and conditions that minimized or maximized the OALs' earning capacity. Nevertheless, in contrast to Carlo, I would emphasize several points. First, whether the state has been owner or guarantor (prior to 1965 or subsequently), Yugoslav strikes have *always* largely centered on wage issues rather than, say, price rises or changes in production norms. Second, Yugoslav strikers have *always* sought recourse from the state: from the federal government in 1958, when the central state set coal prices so low that the striking miners could not be paid, and from the commune government in the 1980s, when inter- and intra-OAL contracts rather than the state set prices and the terms of exchange. Thus Carlo's insistence on the radical change that the Yugoslav leadership instituted with market socialism in the 1960s — an insistence that is central to his argument — ignores strong elements of continuity.

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workers in harsh conditions and befouling the [work] environment on the basis of narrow interests and 'profiteer's logic.'" Yet the number of workers who are willing to work overtime continues not only to grow but to accelerate quickly. (Unlike many Soviet-style factories, overtime in Yugoslavia is not necessarily forced by management.) During the first nine months of 1977, for example, the number of workers who put in overtime grew twice as fast as the number of people that were hired, especially in manual work.[32] As in the case of strikes, overtime occurs most frequently in OALs where wages are insecure. Metalworking, coal mining, textiles — the same industries where Jovanov found most strikes in the sixties — have the most overtime work in the 1970s. In shipbuilding, which suffers from both seasonality and world market demand, a fifth to a quarter of the work force puts in overtime. But the motivation is obvious on the part of both work force and (self-)management. Workers in the productive sector of the economy raised their wages by 20% through overtime in 1976 and 1977. (This accounts in part for the increase in wage expenditures in the OALs.) The increase helped them to pay for decollectivized public goods — most importantly, housing — and for the consumer goods that are readily available. Meanwhile, the workers' councils were able to increase production through overtime without going to the expense of adding new workers to the payroll. Particularly in Yugoslavia, where employment security is guaranteed by law and consequently workers are rarely fired, OALs in troubled industrial sectors may find it most efficient not to make a commitment for a job that may be, essentially, a permanent berth. Because white-collar workers are able to raise their wages through overtime even more than blue-collar workers (by 25% in contrast to 20%), all social classes probably connive in upholding the "right" to overtime against the opposition of the political leadership and the labor unions.

Yugoslavs' use of overtime as a "right" contrasts markedly with the overtime work that is apparently forced on industrial workers in other socialist states. Indeed, the relation between workers' strategies to increase wages and leaders' strategies of labor mobilization suggests that the manner of imposing production norms in Yugoslavia is closer to the modern capitalist than the Soviet-style factory. In the Soviet Union, Poland, and Hungary, production norms seem to be set high — at maximum human capacity — so that the workers must spend most of their time merely to make the norm. Moreover, recent economic "reforms" (like the New Economic Mechanism in Hungary, instituted in 1968 and revived in 1979) make wages more variable, so that the workers have to "break" the norm in order to make the money income that they need. Insofar as these reforms also give management greater latitude in running the factory, they really induce the directors to make the piece work system more onerous. Nor do the workers have any "space" to negotiate the norms, such as through turning in an "acceptable" number of pieces over the norm (as in the United States) or countering management proposals about the norm through wage-related discussion (as in Yugoslav self-management). Consequently, the grievance that is generated by the piece work system is

32. "Aktuelni problemi prekovremenog i dopunskog rada," *Sindikati*, no. 3 (1978), pp. 83-100.

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structured differently in Yugoslavia and in the other socialist states. In those countries, workers' grievance erupts in protest when centralized economic decisions simultaneously raise prices and lower wages — or at least make wages more insecure by raising norms. This sort of decision preceded workers' protests in Novocherkask in 1962 and Poland in 1970-71. Meanwhile, some of the 26% of Yugoslav strikes that occurred between 1958 and 1969 also protested production norm issues. But in general, in Yugoslavia grievance is structured into The Wage Phenomenon, where the self-interests of management and labor coincide.[33]

Even more fundamentally than in raises, strikes, and overtime, the unresolved contradictions of The Wage Phenomenon are articulated symbolically, in the failure to derive an acceptable norm of wage distribution. Certainly, the labor theory of value remains the bedrock of both official ideology and individual attitudes, especially among the working class.[34] This idea was encapsulated in the first Yugoslav distributional norm of the post-war period: "Reward according to work" (*"Raspodela prema radu"*). (No socialist state has ever practiced the classical utopian norm, "From each according to ability, to each according to need.") But even the simplicity of a work-related norm camouflages a multitude of specific questions about the quantity and the quality of that work. These include the difficulty of measuring the amount of work that is done, comparing the quality inherent in different types of work and products, determining the relative weights of "dead" and "living" labor in creating value (i.e., weighing such factors as job training, education, skills, and seniority vs. the actual work that is done), quantifying the inequities that are imposed by the labor process in non-productive as opposed to productive work, and defining "work" by job description or by job occupant (i.e., by the tasks that are actually performed or by the qualifications of the person who is performing those tasks). Over time, of course, people in the most highly-rewarded job categories, e.g., the highly-skilled workers and the workers with seniority, develop a vested interest in protecting the criteria on which their wages depend.

The evolution of market socialism in Yugoslavia made it necessary to refor-

33. On forced overtime, see e.g., Moscow Helsinki Group, "Les violations des droits du travail," in *L'Alternative,* no. 1 (1979), p. 7; Paul Goma, " 'Etat ouvrier' et classe ouvrière [in Romania]," in *L'Altérnative,* no. 1, p. 19; KOR and *Robotnik,* "L'homme doit passer avant la production," in *L'Altérnative,* no. 3 (1980), pp. 23-24; on norms at maximum physical capacity, see Miklos Haraszti, *A Worker in a Worker's State: Piece Rates in Hungary,* trans. Michael Right (Hannomdsworth: Penguin, 1977); on raising of piece rates, see Haraxzti and also Lajos Hethy and Csaba Mako, "Stimulants salariaux et économie planifiée," *Sociologie du travail* 15, no. 1 (1973), pp. 30-44; on this aspect of Novocherkask, see Vadim Bielotserkovski, "Les soulèvements ouvriers des années soixante," *L'Altérnative,* no. 3, p. 29, and on Poland, Jan B. de Weydenthal, "The Workers' Dilemma of Polish Politics: A Case Study," *East European Quarterly* 13 (1979), pp. 95-119. On modern capitalist production norms, I am relying on Michael Burawoy's case study, *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process Under Monopoly Capitalism* (University of Chicago Press, 1979).

34. In an unpublished 1978 survey of 850 manual workers throughout Yugoslavia, 38% of the respondents said that the workers should decide questions of distribution because "they create the means" that are distributed. (However, 35% said that the workers should *not* have the right to decide these questions.) 25% thought that executives' salaries and workers' wages should be equal; 38% thought that executives should earn up to twice as much. (The standard intra-enterprise differential is 1:3.)

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mulate the distributional norm. "Reward according to work" was subtly amended in the early 1960s to "Reward according to the results of work" (*"Nagradjivanje prema rezultatima rada"*). At a stroke, this change underlined the substitution of success in the market for the labor theory of value. In theory this may not have been particularly exceptional, but in practice, it forms the substance of much grievance over wages. First, this principle of wage determination symbolizes the fact that wage security no longer exists. Nor can workers exercise a legitimate claim to wage protection. As in the case of enterprises that rise or fall on the market, the distributional norm of "the results of work" guarantees nothing.

Moreover, "the results of work" sets up an ambiguous standard of reward. Yugoslavs are still not certain whether this criterion applies directly to the quantity or quality of the work that is done, or only indirectly to that work, by translating the "results" first into the income that the OAL derives from the work and then into the profit — or loss — that the OAL eventually realizes. If the first criterion applies, then what is being rewarded is intra-OAL or individual productivity. However, if the latter criterion is used, then many factors outside the individual's and even the OAL's control, e.g., product placement, world market prices, or advertising budget, intervene between labor productivity and its "results." Furthermore, a gain in productivity may ultimately be registered — according to "the results" — as a loss. This confusion engenders a good deal of resentment. The discontent over wage distribution is intensified by The Means Issue, for "reproduction funds" and "wage funds" are interdependent. Yugoslavs agree that labor must be the basis of reward and that material rewards should stimulate labor productivity. But the attempt to practice the labor theory of value in an unplanned economy makes Wages into a Phenomenon.[35]

Squaring the Circle

The Wage Phenomenon and The Means Issue dramatize the major contradictions that underlie the non-corecive strategies of labor mobilization and capital accumulation that Yugoslavia, in contrast to other socialist states, has developed. They have obvious costs and benefits regarding the "socialist" quality of the society. While The Means Issue and The Wage Phenomenon fragment social classes, particularly the working class, into factions struggling over money questions rather than the basic direction of the society, at least they offer a legitimate "space" for struggle. Regardless of which social class dominates workers' councils and earns the most income (in practice, this is the class of bureaucrats and technocrats), self-management and the market create their own dynamic. In particular, they delay the totalization of the state's hegemony. Ironically, it was the state that introduced both self-management and the market in Yugoslavia.

Certain problems remain unresolved. The major problem concerns the problematic identification of self-interest with the general interest, and who or what institutions can legitimately claim to represent that unified will. Yet

35. Cf. the lack of consensus on a distributional norm even among the managerial stratum of Slovenian enterprises reported in a 1969 survey, "Radnici o reformi," *Sindikati,* no. 9 (1969), pp. 646-63.

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the Titoist strategy that structures both work and its rewards has succeeded in avoiding a large part of the physical force, the moral hypocrisy, and the profound dissent that are typical of socialist society as it exists in the world today. Moreover, Titoism has developed through compromise among top leaders and territorial interests. It has not been imposed by the center to a greater degree than it has been accepted in their own self-interest by the various decentralized institutions (primarily enterprises, communes, and republics). With this degree of consensus among politicians, there is no reason that commitment to Titoism should falter. Besides, the flexibility of Titoism as a strategic approach to the typical problems of a socialist state rather than a set of substantive policies should permit future leaders, as it has permitted the Partisan generation including Tito, a range of responses to concrete difficulties. Serious obstacles arise, however, when the social space that self-management and markets provide is used by very successful or very unsuccessful decentralized actors, not merely to compete with the state but to challenge the state's authority. In that case they may not want to compromise.

Nevertheless, in the realm of state policy, the death of President Tito pushes the leadership to resolve questions of ideology even less and pragmatic questions even more than they have. As in other societies, immediate problems concern employment, especially of young people; new construction of housing; and aid for troubled industrial sectors. There are also the foreign debts. If, as I have suggested, the market in Yugoslavia has become identified with efficacy, then the leadership will emphasize market mechanisms as they did in the 1960s. However, the austerity that appears necessary in a world economic crisis, especially in the West European neighbors with whose economic policy Yugoslavia may align itself, still demands controls. Self-management will continue to be useful here. A major problem may arise in the continued growth of the white-collar sector of the labor force, which perhaps has developed prematurely for Yugoslavia's level of economic development. At this point a pragmatic issue — how to affect the balance of white-collar vs. blue-collar workers — dovetails with an ideological question about labor and its rewards. Moreover, structuring the labor force requires an intensification of controls, either financial rewards or coercive mobilization. These questions arose in the 1978-79 educational reforms, which were intended in part to cut down the number of managerial employees, humanities students, and academic high school curricula or *gymnasiums*. The basic dilemma of The Means Issue appears in education in a somewhat different form: How little will people accept? How much can the society afford?

In a critique of Yugoslav studies of social structure and the sources of power in that country, Zaga Pesic-Golubovic points out the fallacy of social class analysis that, for political or ideological reasons, fails to specify what the basis of class is.[36] Similarly, analyses of Yugoslavia's various crises and reforms suffer from the failure to specify the Titoist basis of Yugoslav political economy. Yugoslavs are afraid to jeopardize the consensus on which the federal system rests. Foreigners can't see the forest — Titoism — for the trees,

36. Zagorka Golubovic et al., "Analiza studija o strukturi Jugoslovenskog drustva," pp. 7-52 in *Klase i slojevi: Prilozi izucavanju drustvenog sistema,* ed. Rudi Supek, Biblioteka Covek i sistem, sv. 5 (Zagreb, 1977).

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particularly self-management and market socialism. On both sides, the discussion of Yugoslav political economy has to be taken out of the rarified atmosphere of the "tending toward capitalism — tending toward socialism" debate. As I have tried to suggest, the framework of labor mobilization and capital accumulation in a socialist state provides a starting point.[37]

37. See also Gabor Rittersporn, "The State Against Itself: Social Tensions and Political Conflict in the USSR, 1936-38," in *Telos*, no. 41 (Fall, 1979), pp. 87-104; Viktor Zaslavsky, "The USSR and the Working Class," in *Telos*, no. 42 (Winter, 1979-80), pp. 5-20; and my review on the Soviet industrial worker in *Telos*, no 43 (Spring, 1980), pp. 189-198.

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MARCUSE AND BENJAMIN: THE ROMANTIC DIMENSION

by Michael Löwy

Although the affinity between Marcuse and Benjamin has been noticed frequently, there has been no systematic attempt to examine the nature of their spiritual kinship. Scholem once wrote in his "Reflections on Jewish Theology" that Benjamin and Marcuse are among "the most important ideologists of revolutionary messianism . . . whose acknowledged or unacknowledged ties to their Jewish heritage are evident."[1] This is certainly accurate for Benjamin, but much less evident for Marcuse.

Jewish messianism is clearly one of the main sources of Benjamin's *Weltanschauung*; in its apocalyptic, catastrophic, destructive dimension, and in its hope for absolute redemption, it is intimately linked to the utopian anarchism of Benjamin's political writings of the 1920s. Yet, both Jewish messianic and the utopian anarchist tendencies were rooted on the same cultural foundation: German Romanticism, in its anti-bourgeois aspect and its nostalgia for the pre-capitalist society and culture. Neo-romantic cultural criticism of industrial capitalist society, in the name of *Kultur* against *Zivilisation*, or *Gemeinschaft* against *Gesellschaft*, was one of the main themes in German literature, philosophy and the social sciences at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. Even a rationalist such as Weber was not immune to it. Benjamin's first writings, including his 1919 doctoral thesis on German Romanticism, as well as his famous 1922 essay on Goethe's *Wahlverwandschaften*, clearly fall into this context: in his *Dissertation* he discovers the idea of messianism in Schlegel and Novalis, as he found it in the Jewish tradition.

Marcuse, on the contrary, has hardly any links to messianism, Jewish or Christian, nor to religion in general. His attitude to religion is that of an *Aufklärer* and his world view is utterly secular and atheistic. What he does have in common with Benjamin is not so much Jewish messianism as German Romanticism, with its nostalgia for pre-capitalist communities and its counterposing of artistic *Kultur* to prosaic bourgeois society. There is a great similarity between his 1922 dissertation, *Der deutsche Künstlerroman* (The German Artist Novel), and Benjamin's *Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik* (The Concept of Art Criticism in German Romanticism). Marcuse's recently published doctoral thesis is essential for understanding his intellectual evolution from this youthful work and his later writings. The central theme of the book is the contradiction between the world of Idea and empirical reality, art and bourgeois life — a contradiction painfully perceived and expressed by the Romantics. Some of them, particularly Novalis, tried to overcome this duality by ignoring the empirical

1. Gershom Scholem, *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis* (Schocken, N.Y., 1976), p. 287. Scholem mentions also Bloch and Adorno.

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world, replacing it with an ideal reality — an imaginary new world dominated by love and peace, Eros and Freya. Others, like Goethe in the *Sorrows of the Young Werther*, show how the artist's idealist subjectivity leads him to a radical conflict with the *zweckhaft-rationellen* order of reality — a conflict that cannot but end with his surrender or death. And some later Romantics, like E.T.A Hoffman, are attracted to the ancient, dark and dissolving forces of passion that threaten to explode the existing world.[2] For Marcuse, most of the artist novels (i.e., novels whose central hero is an artist) contain a critical dimension against the growing industrialization and mechanization of economic and cultural life, as a process that destroys or marginalizes all spiritual values. He stresses the burning aspiration of many Romantic or neo-Romantic writers for a radical change of life, breaking the narrow limits of bourgeois-philistine materialism, and he compares them with contemporary utopian socialists such as Fourier.[3] Some of these ideas of *Der deutsche Kunstlerroman* reappear, almost unchanged, in *Eros and Civilization* and *One Dimensional Man*.

There is a striking parallel between the intellectual evolution of Marcuse and Benjamin: both begin with German Romanticism and the problems of art; both move towards Marxism during the 1920s, under the influence of Lukacs and Korsch, and both become linked to the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research during the 1930s; both are highly critical of social democracy, hope for a socialist revolutionary transformation, but refuse to join the Communist Party; and they probably met in Germany or in Paris (1933). Nevertheless, to the best of our knowledge, during Benjamin's lifetime, there is no mention of him in Marcuse's writings.[4] Why this silence? One possible hypothesis is that after the short Heideggerian interlude of 1928-32, Marcuse moved increasingly away from Romanticism and toward an interpretation of Marxism linking it to the tradition of Western Rationalism, from Plato to Descartes, and from the *Aufklärung* to Hegel.

During his whole life, Marcuse's Marxism moved between two poles: the Romantic and the rationalist. For him, these poles are not contradictory. They have a common element, which is the constant substance of his thought: *negation*, the opposition between the idea and the given reality. There is a remarkable passage in Marcuse's 1960 new preface to *Reason and Revolution* where this is explicitly stated: "Dialectic and poetic language

2. Referring to E.T.A. Hoffmann, Marcuse notes that in his works "no bridge can be built over the abyss" between passion and the real world; in his essay on Goethe's *Wahlversandschaften*, also written in 1922, Benjamin advances exactly the same idea: there is in the novel an abyss between passion and "bourgeois life." See Walter Benjamin, "Goethes Wahlverwandschaften," 1922, now in *Illuminationen* (Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a.M., 1969), p. 131.

3. Herbert Marcuse, *Der Deutsche Künstleroman*, 1922, now in *Schriften*, vol. I (Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a.M., 1978), pp. 43-49, 86, 117-119, 133-143.

4. Benjamin mentions Marcuse in his short article on the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research (1938), and also refers favorably, in a letter to Horkheimer, to Marcuse's contribution to the collective volume *Autorität und Familie*. See Walter Benjamin, "Ein Deutsches Institut Freier Forschung," 1938, in *Gesammelte Schriften* (Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a.M., 1972), vol. III, pp. 526, 683.

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meet...on common ground. The common element is the search for...the language of negation as the Great Refusal."[5] For Marcuse, another link between rationalism and Romanticism is their commitment to *qualitative* human values, cultural or ethical, as opposed to mere quantitative values of the capitalist market. But Reason is conceived as *substantial*, not purely formal and instrumental, which also can be found in capitalist industry, even in concentration camps. This unity of the two poles is the unity of Marcuse's *oeuvre* beyond the particular (Romantic or rationalist) emphasis of different periods of his intellectual evolution.

During the 1930s and 1940s, the rationalist pole becomes predominant in Marcuse's thought. After 1925, when he published an annotated bibliography of Schiller's works, the problems of art, literature and culture and their opposition to reality tend to disappear from his writings for the next three decades. Although in 1937 he published an essay on "The Affirmative Character of Culture," this text, far from being a restatement of his 1922 ideas, is precisely their *most radical negation*. According to it, traditional culture — in particular literature, by preserving an ideal world above and opposed to the vulgarity of daily life, plays an ideological and conservative role; the beauty of the "soul" (*Seele*) is extolled as a compensation for the wretchedness of the material world: "The freedom of the soul was used to excuse the misery, martyrdom and enslavement of the body. It serves the ideological surrender of existence to the economy of capitalism.... The soul has a tranquilizing effect...the joys of the soul are cheaper than those of the body and less dangerous." Marcuse seems to believe that there is a basic difference between philosophy and literature, in their relation to the established state of affairs: "The beauty of art — in contrast to the truth of theory — is compatible with the existing evil."

Therefore, to this "affirmative" cultural sphere, with its illusory freedom and happiness, Marcuse opposes the tradition of rational philosophy — Descartes, Kant, Hegel — which is alien to the concept of "soul" and committed to the critical rationality of *spirit*. While the concept of *Seele* is typical of irrationalist tendencies, from romantic historicism (Herder) to modern authoritarian doctrines (a euphemism for fascist ideology), "Hegel does not fit in the authoritarian states. He was for the spirit; the new ones are for the soul and for sentiment." Of course, Marcuse is aware of the one-sided character of this indictment of traditional art and literature in the bourgeois era; he recognizes that they "contain not only the justification of established forms of existence, but also the pain of its existence; not only the reconciliation with that which is, but also the memory of that which could be. Great bourgeois art, because it...painted the beauty of people and things and a supra-earthly happiness with the bright colors of this world...deposed at the foundation of bourgeois life not only false consolation...but also true nostalgia (*Sehnsucht*)." This insight will become decisive in Marcuse's late

5. Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, "Preface," (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), p. x.

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writings. In 1937, however, it is integrated as a subordinate element in the general conception of culture as "affirmative": "Culture becomes a servant of the existent. The rebellious idea becomes a level for its justification.... Since art depicts the beautiful as present, it brings rebellious nostalgia to a halt." Needless to say, such a theoretical framework could not but alienate Marcuse from Benjamin's aesthetic and cultural preoccupations.[6]

This rationalist orientation, which runs through most of Marcuse's 1930s essays, culminating in 1941 with *Reason and Revolution*, may explain why he ignored Benjamin's works. Conversely, Marcuse's increasing move toward the romantic pole in the '50s and '60s may be one of the reasons why he rediscovered Benjamin at that time. One can trace the development of this new turn in Marcuse's thinking through the various prefaces to *Reason and Revolution*, from 1941, 1954 and 1960. In 1941 Marcuse still praised the "American rationalist spirit." This had a direct political translation in his activity as an (anti-fascist) adviser for the American Office of Strategic Services during the war. But in the 1950s, after the Cold War and McCarthyism, and after a deeper study of American society, Marcuse grew increasingly critical of industrial civilization and its instrumental rationality. In the "Epilogue" written in 1954 for the second edition of the book, Marcuse recognized the *contradictory* character of the Western rationalist tradition: "From the beginning, the idea and the reality of Reason in the modern period contained the elements which endangered its promise of a free and fulfilled existence: the enslavement of man by his own productivity...the repressive mastery of nature in man and outside."[7] At the same time, he rediscovered the subversive virtues of imagination and art, i.e., the problematic of his early 1920 writings.

This new "Romantic" period began with *Eros and Civilization* (1955) where, reinterpreting Freud, Marcuse contraposed erotic sensuousness to the rationality of the performance principle. Art was then conceived in a completely different light than in the 1937 essay (which had opposed the truth of theory to the illusory beauty of artistic imagination): "Fantasy is cognitive in so far as it preserves the truth of the Great Refusal, or, positively, in so far as it protects, against all reason, the aspirations for the integral fulfillment of man and nature which are repressed by reason." The great German writer on

6. Herbert Marcuse, "Ueber den Affirmativen Charakter der Kultur," 1937, now in *Kultur und Gesellschaft*, vol. I (Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a.M., 1970), pp. 67-68, 76-81, 89-94. Benjamin knew this essay and mentions it in his notice on the Frankfurt Institute (1938), where he stresses, in reference to Marcuse, the need to oppose a *critical* concept of culture to the "affirmative" one. For him, this "critical culture" is not identified, as for Marcuse, with rationalist philosophy and Hegel: it is made up of cultural elements which, "linked to their early times and to their dreams, do not deny their solidarity with the coming humanity, with humanity herself." Far from rejecting, as Marcuse, the bourgeois cultural tradition as "ideology," he insists on the need to "salvage the cultural heritage" and, by developing critical insights, to "make room for an authentic tradition." Cf. Benjamin, "Ein Deutsches Institut....", in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. III, *op.cit.*, pp. 525-526.

7. Herbert Marcuse, "Epilogue," *Reason and Revolution* (New York: The Humanities Press, 1954), p. 433. Of course, it is probable that Marcuse had also been influenced by Adorno and Horkheimer's criticism of the Rationalist tradition in *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1947), but there is no doubt that he followed his own path to this conclusion.

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whom he had worked in 1925 comes once more into the fore: Friedrich Schiller, whose aesthetic essays attain an "explosive quality" by showing that "freedom would have to be sought in the liberation of sensuousness rather than reason," or at least that "the laws of reason must be reconciled with the interests of the senses." Moreover, according to Marcuse, "Herder and Schiller, Hegel and Novalis developed in almost identical terms the concept of alienation. As industrial society begins to take shape under the rule of the performance principle, its inherent negativity permeates the philosophical analysis" (a quote from Schiller follows). This remark is highly significant: it combines in the same socio-cultural "front" artists and philosophers, Romantics and Rationalists, and in particular two thinkers Marcuse had counterposed in 1937 as representatives of the *Seele* (Herder) and of the *Geist* (Hegel).[8]

It is no accident that in *Eros and Civilization,* the first work where the Romantic dimension of Marcuse's thought re-emerges, is also to be found Marcuse's "rediscovery" of Walter Benjamin. He quotes, comments on and praises an important passage from the *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (1940). When Marcuse wrote the book, Benjamin's main essays had not yet been republished (Marcuse quotes the *Theses* from a 1950 publication in *Die neue Rundschau*). It is well known that Adorno's edition of the *Schriften* in 1955 became the starting point for a general reception of Benjamin by the Western radical intelligentsia. But Marcuse's interest in him precedes and is not related to it. It flows, rather, from the inner dynamics of his own spiritual development.

In the passage quoted by Marcuse, Benjamin writes: "The wish to break the continuum of history belongs to the revolutionary class in the moment of action." In connection with this passage and the whole content of Benjamin's *Theses*, Marcuse argues: "Remembrance is no real weapon unless it is translated into historical action. Then, the struggle against time becomes a decisive moment in the struggle against domination." The memory of the past as a weapon in the fight for the future: one could hardly imagine a more striking and precise formulation of the Romantic revolutionary perspective, which is common to Marcuse and Benjamin and pervades both their political and their aesthetic views.[9]

From 1955 to his last writings, Marcuse was attracted once more to art and the Romantic artistic ideal of a world dominated by Eros and peace. This ideal is one of the central features of *One Dimensional Man* (1964), where he stressed its critical potential: "The traditional images of artistic alienation *are indeed romantic* in as much as they are in aesthetic incompatibility with the developing society. *This incompatibility is the token of their truth.* What they recall and preserve in memory pertains to the future: images of a gratification that would dissolve the society which suppresses it. The great surrealist art and literature of the 1920s and 1930s has still recaptured them

8. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (1955) (New York: Sphere Books, 1969), pp. 132, 151, 154.

9. Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization, op.cit.*, p. 186.

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in their subversive and liberating function."[10] Similar statements on the contradiction between the artistic or poetic universe and the given reality, as well as on the revolutionary dimension of surrealism are also to be found in Marcuse's subsequent books. For instance, in *An Essay on Liberation* (1969), he hails the absolute non-conformism of surrealist poets who find "in the poetic language the semantic elements of the revolution."[11] Benjamin was also a great admirer of surrealism, precisely for its Romantic revolutionary and libertarian character. In his essay on French surrealism (1929), he wrote: "Since Bakunin, Europe has been lacking a radical concept of liberty. The surrealists have it.... To win the forces of Rausch for the revolution, that was the aim of surrealism in all its books and enterprises."[12]

Marcuse insists — in *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (1972) — that in the most important works of art and literature since the 19th century "a thoroughly *anti-bourgeois* stance is prevalent: the higher culture indicts, rejects, withdraws from the material culture of the bourgeoisie. It is indeed separated; it dissociates itself from the world of commodities, from the brutality of bourgeois industry and commerce, from the distortion of human relationships, from capitalist materialism, from instrumentalist reason. The aesthetic universe *contradicts* reality." It is significant that among the great works of literature which represent for Marcuse the most authentic, absolute and uncompromising form of sublimated Eros, works which, in his view — in *One Dimensional Man* — are "beyond the reaches of the established Reality Principle, which the Eros refuses and explodes" are Goethe's *Wahlverwandschaften* and Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal* — two books that are central in Benjamin's aesthetic and philosophical reflection (the first one in the 1920s and the second one during the 1930s).[13]

The relation to Benjamin occupies a very special place in *One Dimensional Man*. As is well known, the book ends with a powerful and moving homage to him: "Critical theory...holding no promise and showing no success, remains negative. Thus it wants to remain loyal to those who, without hope, have given and give their life to the Great Refusal. At the beginning of the fascist era, Walter Benjamin wrote: 'Nur um der Hoffnungslosen willen ist uns die Hoffnung gegeben.' It is only for the sake of those without hope that hope is given to us."[14] In its original context, this passage from Benjamin's 1922 essay on Goethe's *Wahlverwandschaften* had a deep religious meaning, while Marcuse gives it a directly political translation (in a way typical of his "secular" reading of Benjamin).

One can find here a *common* element, a peculiar quality of their style of thought, which could be designated as *desperate hope* or *pessimist revolution-*

10. Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (London: Routledge, 1964), p. 60 (emphasis added).
11. Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 33.
12. Walter Benjamin, "Der Sürrealismus" (1929), in *Angelus Novus* (Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a.M., 1966), p. 212.
13. Herbert Marcuse, *Counter-revolution and Revolt* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), p. 86; *One Dimensional Man, op.cit.*, p. 77.
14. Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man, op.cit.*, p. 257.

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arism. Both Marcuse and Benjamin refuse to believe that the "natural course" of history, the development of productive forces or inevitable social progress will lead to a rational and liberated society. For them, as Benjamin formulated it in a most remarkable image, the revolutionaries must learn to "brush history against the grain." There is no predestined and irresistible triumph of humanity and reason. Left to itself, "progress" produces only, as in Benjamin's allegory of the angel of history, a "pile of wreckage." Revolution is not "swimming with the stream," but is a fierce struggle against the blind forces of history, a hard and protracted war whose end result cannot be predicted. In a post-script to a new edition of Marx's *18th Brumaire*, Marcuse wrote: "the consciousness of defeat, even desperation, belongs to the truth of the theory and its hope." Far from favoring passivity (as does resignation *as well as official optimism* in Kautsky), this brand of voluntarist pessimism is, on the contrary, the most desperate call for action, initiative, and resistance.[15]

In this respect, *One Dimensional Man* owes much to Benjamin's 1940 *Theses*. One can therefore understand why, at the same year as his book appeared (1964), Marcuse felt the need to write an essay on Walter Benjamin himself. This little known piece is an afterword to a collection of five articles by Benjamin, among them the *Theses on the Philosophy of History* and the *Critique of Violence* (1921). It is not a systematic piece, but clearly reveals the common features between the two — as well as their differences.

First of all both Marcuse and Benjamin stand for an *absolute* negation of the existing social order. Both aspire to a *radical* revolution and recognize the need of oppressed groups to use *violence* against the oppressors. Commenting on Benjamin's essay on violence (1921), Marcuse stresses: "The violence, to which Benjamin's criticism is directed, is not the one... employed from below against those above.... The violence criticized by Benjamin is that of the existent (*Bestehenden*), which obtained from the existent itself the monopoly of legitimacy, of truth and of right.... Benjamin took much too seriously the promise contained in the word 'Peace' to be a pacifist...."[16] Both are irreconcilably opposed to all reformism and gradualism and perceive revolution as *an explosion of the historical continuum*, a totally new beginning, and not an improved version of the existing, or the cumulative result of progressive evolution. At the same time, paradoxically, this new future implies a return to the precapitalist past: as Benjamin puts it in his famous image, revolution is "a dialectical leap of the tiger into the past." These and other *leitmotifs* of Benjamin's 1940 *Theses* are shared by Marcuse, not only in this essay on Benjamin, but in most of his 1960 and 1970 works.

However, there are also undeniable differences in their understanding of revolution. In his commentaries, Marcuse ignores the anarchist component of

15. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," 1940, in *Illuminations* (London: J. Cape, 1970), p. 259-61. On Marcuse's "pessimism" see Russel Jacoby's interesting essay "Reversal and Lost Meanings" in Paul Breines, editor, *Critical Interruptions, New Left Perspectives on Herbert Marcuse* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), p. 70-78.

16. Herbert Marcuse, "Nachwort" in Walter Benjamin, *Zur Kritik der Gewalt* (Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a.M., 1965), p. 99-100.

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Benjamin's early writings and tries to neutralize their religious content by presenting a thoroughly secular and a-theological interpretation of Benjamin's messianism. Thus, he writes: "It becomes clear in Benjamin's critique of violence that messianism is the form of appearance of a historical truth: liberated humanity is only conceivable as the radical (no more the simply 'determinate') negation of the existent, because under the power of the existent even the Good itself becomes powerless and an accomplice. Benjamin's messianism has nothing to do with traditional religiosity: guilt and expiation are for him social categories."[17] This interpretation may be partly true, but it is one-sided: Benjamin's deep theological dimension, rooted in the Jewish tradition, is linked to social categories, but cannot be reduced to them. Marcuse's remarks are as revealing of his own views as of Benjamin's messianism. While in 1941, in *Reason and Revolution*, he still spoke in terms of a "determinate" negation of the given reality, now, in 1964, he pleads for more total negativity.

The other broad outlook shared by Benjamin and Marcuse is that both criticize not only capitalism but, more generally, all of industrial society, reified technology and alienated productivity, the destruction of nature and the myth of progress. As Marcuse writes in his essay on Benjamin: "In opposition to the abominable concept of progressive productivity, for whom nature 'exists gratis' to be exploited, Benjamin professes Fourier's idea of a social labor which 'far from exploiting nature, is capable of delivering her of the creations which lie dormant in her womb as potentials.' To liberated humanity, redeemed from oppressive violence, corresponds a liberated and redeemed nature."[18] This is also one of the reasons why both are so critical of the Soviet Union, which failed in their eyes to generate a real alternative to the industrial society of the West, with its productivism and its technological reification.

On the other hand, both Benjamin and Marcuse recognize — each in his own way — the emancipatory possibilities of modern technology. This applies to cinema in the cultural area, for Benjamin, and to automation in the economic sphere, for Marcuse. Both try to grasp the contradictory nature of material progress and industrial technology, even if their conclusions are not the same (Marcuse, like Adorno and Horkheimer, is more critical than Benjamin of the mass reproduction of art and cultural goods).

Benjamin is once more mentioned in Marcuse's last work, *The Aesthetic Dimension* (1977), where the contradiction between art (literature) and established reality, which was the subject matter of his 1922 *Dissertation*, again becomes the main theme of his work. Although in 1977 modern and not classic romantic writers are central, Marcuse mentions, as one of the crass errors of dogmatic Marxist aesthetics, "the denigration of romanticism as simply reactionary." *The Aesthetic Dimension* does not oppose "soul" to Reason; it shows that art is committed to the emancipation of sensibility,

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

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imagination *and* reason — a reason distinct from the rationality of the dominant institutions. By its association with Eros against instinctual repression, the aesthetic dimension is a protest against the established world and a promise of liberation. And by preserving the memory of things past, it fulfills a revolutionary role, since "the authentic utopia is grounded in recollection."

The two references to Benjamin in this book reveal Marcuse's affinity with his friend's romantic dimension but also a certain reserve toward his views on the relation between art and politics. It seems as if Marcuse feels closer to the "Baudelairian Benjamin" than to the "Brechtian Benjamin." Although he is an admirer of Brecht's poems (one of them is extensively quoted in *One Dimensional Man*), Marcuse is inclined to believe that, as he puts it, "there may be more subversive potential in the poetry of Baudelaire and Rimbaud than in the didactic plays of Brecht." He criticizes Benjamin's most "Brechtian" writing, "The Author as Producer," for its "identification of literary and political quality in the domain of art." On the other hand, he greatly admires Benjamin's essays on the *poètes maudits*: "the degree to which the distance and estrangement from praxis constitute the emancipatory value of art becomes particularly clear in those works of literature which seem to close themselves rigidly against such praxis. Benjamin has traced this in the works of Poe, Baudelaire, Proust and Valery." There follows a quotation from a fragment where Benjamin refers to Baudelaire as an "agent of the secret discontent of his class with its own rule." Marcuse then adds this commentary: "The 'secret' protest of this esoteric literature lies in the ingression of the primary erotic-destructive forces which explode the normal universe of communication and behavior. They are asocial in their very nature, a subterranean rebellion against the social order."[19]

Both Marcuse and Benjamin were romantic revolutionaries — romantic in the sense of nostalgia for precapitalist *Kultur*, a nostalgia preserved in great art as "remembrance of things past" and revolutionary because they transformed this nostalgia of the past into a radical negation of the present order, and into a "desperate hope" for a radically new future society.

This romantic revolutionarism is *not* contradictory with their Marxism, since in Marx and Engels, too, there is a romantic dimension — it is enough to mention their attitude toward certain writers (Carlyle, Balzac and others). It is, of course, a dimension suppressed by the "one-dimensional" Marcuse of the 20th century. Finally, this romantic revolutionary orientation is not alien to class struggle, since both Benjamin and Marcuse, each in his way, saw his whole work, life and thought as ultimately linked to the struggle of the oppressed for their emancipation.

19. Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), p. xii-xiii, 6-9, 11, 19-20, 33, 73.

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BRECHT'S PERSONAL POLITICS

by H. Pachter

You have asked me to tell you what I know of Bert Brecht's personal attitudes to the political questions of his time. Let me state in advance that I find it difficult to comply for two reasons — one external, the other intrinsic. Brecht was an ironical author who liked to conceal his meaning while provoking the reader to find his own answer. In personal conversation he also preferred asking questions to giving answers; moreover, he found many situations so complex that humor was the only appropriate approach, and since humor always starts out from the proposition that before the court of history what is right today may be wrong tomorrow, it was often difficult to predict on which side he would come down in practical, everyday politics. The second difficulty was that Brecht shared with other persons of his stature the habit of using people. This appears very clearly, though involuntarily, in the memoirs of Fritz Sternberg and others who boast that they had some influence on Brecht's intellectual development. Having been in the position of an apprentice, I am painfully aware that when Brecht asked me a question it was not to receive instruction from me, but either to educate me or to be challenged by my stupidity. Moreover, it was clear at all times that Brecht did not approve of my critical attitude to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. We avoided the subject whenever possible, and he compartmentalized his ambiances — keeping his party friends apart from Korsch and me. Because of these limitations, I shall speak as little as possible from personal experience, and as much as possible from public sources.

To understand why the poet Bertolt Brecht had to die in East Germany, one must first comprehend how serious, how deadly serious, he felt about the reform of poetry and the theater. When the soldiers came back from World War I, no one was expressing their nausea, their disgust, their contempt of middle-class reality they were supposed to integrate into. Not the Expressionists, who greeted those hardened and disillusioned trench dogs with the illusionist effusions of *Oh Mensch* lyricism. Nor, of course, the dispensers of traditional, classical German culture, the Ph.D.s who directed middle-class taste back to the "culinary" consumption of cultural goods, the aesthetic hypocrites and the hired phrase-mongers who knew how to "conjure up a charmed mountain for money but did not speak of things that mattered" (I am merely paraphrasing; Brecht had a lifelong feud with Thomas Mann).[1] What the new generation needed was a theater that showed it like it was in a language like the one that was spoken. Gottfried Benn, Ernst Jünger, Georg Kaiser, Alfred Döblin, Bertolt Brecht, Arnolt Bronnen and Heinrich Mann provided that new language, each in his way, and each in his own way

1. "Einige Tragen an einen guten Mann," *Gedichte III* (Frankfurt, 1960), p. 164.

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expressed his impatience with the old framework of thoughts.[2] They were not interested in social reform or republican politics, nor did they care to analyze the middle-class individual's psyche; in fact, Goethe's great ideal — personality — had disappeared in the trenches, and just when the Republic tried to revive that ideal, inflation wiped out its material base, middle-class property.

They all hated the *Bürger* who had impersonated German culture for a hundred and fifty years. Some of them also expressed their revulsion through some kind of political radicalism — be it the extreme right or the extreme left. But even they were anti-political rather than political in the sense that they considered reforms as mere deceptions to make an intolerable status quo look tolerable. They expected the Republic to crumble and did their best to push what was tottering, to desecrate what was holy, to debunk what seemed certain. Their politics was anarchic nihilism or elitist contempt: dreams of chaos and terror — Jünger's chiseled nightmares of the militaristic beehive, Benn's fantasy of a Führer acting out the expressionist cataclysm, Bronnen's bloody version of totally dehumanized man (he was Brecht's closest friend for some years, whose play "Parricide" Brecht staged; later, to spite his Jewish stepfather, Bronnen joined the Nazis). It is simply not true that those who had been wounded by the front experience had to go to the left. Brecht's gruesome *Ballad of the Dead Soldier* may today look like a pacifist poem; but when we compare it with his other poems of that time, it is clear that he was interested in the gory images suggested by war, just as Gottfried August Bürger had used in 1774 the awesome fantasy of the dead soldier calling for his sweetheart. Reviewing later his poems of the 1920s, Brecht judged that they showed "bourgeois decadence." His poetry, he noted in his 1940 diary, then "had reached that degree of dehumanization that Marx saw in the proletariat, and also its hopelessness which, however, may turn into hope. Most deal with decline; the poems follow the rotten bourgeoisie into its fall. Beauty rises out of wrecks; the sublime grovels in dusty senselessness which is hailed as liberation. The poet does not even identify with himself" (Aug. 20, 1940).

In these early poems and plays Brecht *poses as a cynic*. His attitude to the world is one of brutal detachment; but he betrays an impish pleasure in following the antics of rogues and the lusty schemes of cheats, thieves, murderers, pimps and whores, vagabonds, and other rejects of society. His was the world of circus folk and bohemians; his patron saints were Rimbaud and Frank Wedekind.

What distinguished him from others who carried no less chaos in their souls were two things, both of which point to his later commitment. One was his ability to find the precise words that characterized this world without necessarily speaking for it or on its behalf. For, secondly, he was interested in these misfits only because they seemed to reveal some truths by which the respectable people, too, were living. The Chicago gangsters, the Soho

2. See Hugo von Hofmannsthal's ironic prologue to *Baal*, as quoted by Martin Esslin in *Brecht* (London: Eyre, 1959), p. 29.

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underworld fell afoul of rules that merely concealed society's own crimes; they were both more amusing and more honest, but Brecht longed for rules that would take from them the stigma of contempt, and for some order that would liberate all from hypocrisy. Even much later, he referred to socialism by the code word "the great order."

For basically, Brecht was a Puritan, and the critics who admonished him to overcome his chaos were appealing to a responsive mind.[3] Through his art he meant to hold a mirror up to men, forcing them to see themselves as they were. His socialism did not grow out of the pity he felt for the poor or out of solidarity with the disinherited, nor even out of his rebellious instinct, but out of his need for a better order. The status quo forced people to be hypocritical and to live by cheating their fellow men. This is how he saw capitalism. And this is especially how he saw America, the foremost country of free enterprise: a brutal, chaotic war for survival, each against all, with no holds barred, tycoons had no better morals than thieves. The *Jungle of the Cities; Saint Joan of the Stockyards; Mahagonny:* These images of an America that he had not yet seen were not refuted by Hollywood when he came to live there ten years later. The parasitical, not the productive, side of capitalism is also the object of his scorn in *The Threepenny Opera:* again, the representatives of capitalism are underworld characters, and when he equates prostitution with exploitation he does not think that he speaks metaphorically. The pimps and beggar kings expound the wisdom of capitalistic philosophy: "Eating comes first, then comes morality"; "We would be nice and not so rough, but the conditions are too tough."

All of this was fun, however; the audience did not recognize the ruling class in those beggar kings (and that's why Brecht had to bring out the bitterness in the *Three Penny Novel* five years later). Alfred Kerr, admittedly not a wholly impartial judge, wrote that the original *Beggar's Opera* by John Gay had attacked the society of his time much harder than Brecht, and Adorno criticized Kurt Weil for writing songs that could all too easily be whistled like hit songs and were indeed so used with the bravado of people who proclaimed it as their philosophy that "for this world we live in, No man is bad enough," or who thought that the songs expressed the poet's own philosophy.

Some even thought that the songs were meant to expound Marx's economic interpretation of history as Brecht understood it. Nothing could be further from his intention. By putting them into the mouth of Peachum, Brecht was denouncing these views. Those who misunderstood him may have been unfamiliar with his new technique of theatrical demonstration, and therefore I may have to say a few words on his famous "estrangement effect."[4]

Precisely because Brecht did not identify with his ruffians, he had to

3. In all this he resembled Georg Grosz.

4. One person who understood, strangely, was Ernst von Salomon (the national-Bolshevist, author of *The Outlaws*) who wrote in *Die Stadt* (Rowohlt, 1932), p. 234.: "Even the boldly articulated sentence: Eating comes first, then comes morality, could not be interpreted as the breakthrough of an unheard-of new insight, but had its effect through the naked brutality with which it named something that was commonplace, and also through the uncertainty as to whose leg was being pulled."

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prevent the spectator, too, from being carried away. He always placed some device — even if only a fair crier or a billboard announcing the scene — between the spectator and actor; or he had a chorus addressing the spectator and asking him to judge the action. He constantly reminded the audience of the fact that the actors were merely demonstrating and that it must not empathize with, or root for, any of them. Consequently, the catharsis that Aristotelian dramaturgy[5] demands in the last act was deferred to the discussion that should take place after the play. Pirandello had triumphantly introduced this style in 1921 with *Six Characters in Search of an Author,* which Brecht must have seen either in Berlin or Munich.

Incidentally, Pirandello also had been concerned with the problem that bothered the German expressionists: vanishing individuality.[6] His characters never know who they are. In *A Man Is a Man,* Brecht showed how a man can be assembled and disassembled. Pirandello thought of life as a perpetual buffoonery: "We constantly create illusions about ourselves which from time to time have to be destroyed. My art is full of compassion for all who deceive themselves."

Understandably, Brecht's eulogists are reluctant to admit the double debt he owed to this "fascist" author. But it is surprising that they describe the "estrangement" devices as an instrument of Brecht's Marxist art after his conversion to communism. It is true that he began to use the term "estrangement" in 1930 (and in German it happens to sound very similar to a much-abused Marxian term which, however, was little known then). But the technique had preceded its name. It could have been suggested to Brecht by the pre-Soviet director Meyerhold or through his own experience with the cabaret in Munich. It is clearly present in *A Man Is a Man* of 1926, when Brecht was not yet a Marxist, and later on it was used by writers such as Friedrich Dürrenmatt and Max Frisch, neither of whom is a Marxist. Moreover, communist critics have always been critical of these Brechtian devices in the theater, no matter how well they may be suited for agitprop groups.

Chronologically, then, we have established the following sequence. In his first phase, Brecht is the angry young man who gives voice to his generation's frustrations; he is a bohemian nihilist who shouts his contempt of the bourgeoisie from the stage. In his second period he is mastering his chaos through a new technique, the art of estrangement, which exposes, demonstrates, and denounces. But the outcasts are no longer his spokesmen; they exhibit the skewed order of the world. Brecht subjects himself and his audience to the discipline of the epic theater's analyzing technique. In his theoretical notes he begins to identify Aristotelian dramaturgy with the sentimentalism of bourgeois audiences. He eschews emotionalism and he teaches his actors to refrain from the effusions and gesticulations that still were the rule on the German and Russian stages.

5. See especially "Kleines Organon für das Theater" in *Versuche 12* (1953), and *Arbeitsjournal* (August, 1940), *passim.*

6. Hofmannsthal, *op.cit.*

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With this, we enter into Brecht's third phase: the Marxist criticism of classical German literature. Brecht is not content to reject the famous German *Bildung*: he now unmasks its function, which is to deny the cruelty of life. In *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*, Brecht lampoons Schiller's *Maid of Orleans* and puts well-known quotations from Faust, or bowdlerized versions thereof, into the mouths of bourgeois while they conclude their most odious deals.[7] Unlike the rogues of the *Threepenny Opera*, they no longer profess a materialistic philosophy but precisely the hand-me-down highmindedness which the German middle class tried so hard to maintain despite war, inflation and, now, Depression. The play, written mostly in the first Depression year, obviously owed much to George Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan* and *Major Barbara,* and it gave a strong Marxist answer to Fritz Lang's famous movie, *Metropolis*. Brecht held false idealism responsible for the acceptance of the Nazi ideology, and he considered his materialistic stage technique an appropriate antidote.

It is from this position that Marxist insights opened themselves to Brecht. He tells us that in writing *Saint Joan* he found it necessary to know how the Chicago commodity exchange operates, and, looking for an answer in Marx's *Kapital*, he came upon answers to much broader questions. The Great Depression was knocking at the door, too, and Brecht had found a willing mentor in Fritz Sternberg, who was a *Weltbühne* contributor and had written a book on imperialism for the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research. But more important was Marxism as a critique of bourgeois ideology and in this respect the decisive encounter was with Karl Korsch, author of *Marxism and Philosophy* in 1929. Korsch had been expelled from the Communist Party in 1926, and he used to meet with other dissidents to the left of the Communist Party at the Café Adler in Berlin. Brecht and Döblin went there occasionally in 1930, but saw Korsch privately more often; probably Brecht met Sidney Hook there. He did not study Marxian economics, but was interested in Marxian dialectics. This was Korsch's specialty, and he also was able to respond to Brecht's concerns with a modern aesthetics — much in contrast to the Party intellectuals, who had more and more fallen into a sterile Stalinist orthodoxy.[8]

But I must make a few reservations here. Brecht also saw many Party communists. With Wieland Herzfelde, John Heartfield, George Grosz, Hanns Eisler he shared artistic interests. In 1930 his friend, mentor and sponsor, Lion Feuchtwanger, published as novel *Success*, one of whose characters, a certain Pröckl, bears Brecht's features. Of him, another character says: "You have been taken in by communism because from birth you have had no social instincts. What for others is a matter of routine throws you when it is novel. Poor man, you cannot empathize with people; you cannot have sympathy

7. A similar device was used by Gerhart Hauptmann in *The Rats,* one of the last naturalist plays of 1910.

8. Given the quality of teaching at the Communist Marxist Workers' School, it is not astonishing that Brecht has not told us the names of any teachers he met there, though he claimed to have attended its courses.

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with others; that's why you look for artificial communication. Moreover, you are a Puritan, you lack the ability to have fun, and you have no charity."[9]

That may be unfair. But whoever know Brecht was struck indeed by his pose of coolness; as he had exhibited a cynical hedonism in the first period, so now he painted his communism in the grey colors of sheer rationalism.

He also saw communism as a military, or perhaps Jesuitic operation. In the oratorio he wrote with Eisler, *The Measure Taken,* four communists have been sent on a secret mission into a foreign country. The youngest of them, however, commits indiscretions: he takes pity on a toiling girl and makes her work easier for her, thus weakening her urge to rebel; he disagrees with a merchant who expounds his exploiter's philosophy to him, instead of enlisting his help for a Party undertaking; finally he takes his mask off and leads workers into a premature uprising, thus endangering the entire mission. His comrades decide to kill him, and the chorus agrees with them. Marxists might object that this is not the way a mass party operates. Even under Stalin the Communist Party was never such a caricature. With just a few words changed, the Nazis might produce the entire oratorio as a justification of their *fehme* murders.[10] But Brecht's oratorio is concerned with politics only in a very superficial way; its real concern is the extinction of the individual. Only a few months earlier, Brecht had written two didactic plays, *The Yes-Sayer* and *The Flyers,* with very similar plots and argument, except that in the first the travelers are not emissaries of a political party but schoolboys and in the second a group of crashed airmen. In either play a sick person must consent to be abandoned. The theme is the overcoming of individual pride, or even life, for the sake of the whole. Brecht, who had shown his toughness first in the guise of nihilism, now showed it in the disciplined form of communism. The theme of doing evil for the sake of good never left him throughout his life. It will appear later on in *The Good Woman of Setzuan* and in a deeply moving *Poem to Posterity*:

> You who will emerge from the flood
> Into which we are sinking
> Remember
> —when you speak of our weaknesses—
> Also the dark time
> Which you have escaped...
> For we know only too well:
> Even hatred of baseness
> Distorts the features
> Even anger at injustice
> Makes the voice harsh. Even we
> Who wished to lay the cornerstone of kindness
> Could not ourselves be kind
> But you, when at last it will come to pass

9. As quoted by Esslin, *op.cit.*, p. 19.

10. Fritz Sternberg's criticism of *The Measure Taken* cast the first shadow on the relation between the two.

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That man will be brother to man
Remember us
with forbearance.[11]

The Measure Taken opens the fourth phase: Brecht's total commitment to the Party. The oratorio was not only ultra-Leninist in its conception of the Party; it also condemns the leftish views Trotsky then held about the Chinese Revolution, and approves of the measure Stalin had taken against him — expelling him from the Party and from the country. At the time this procedure was called "liquidation" in Comintern language, but in 1930 dissidents were not yet shot.

Brecht the nihilist, who had despairingly doubted that there was anything stable in the world, had found a home that was stable. Some have found a similar ambivalence between the anarchist and the disciplinarian in Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Obviously, Brecht's yearning could not be satisfied by the subtle and volatile Marxism of Korsch or the literary mysticism of Walter Benjamin — although he continued to see both of them, he also made fun of them. Like many others, he needed the hefty, self-assured Marxism-Leninism of the Communist Party, the faith of an order rather than the self-critical analysis of intellectuals like himself. He despised intellectuals, and where his enemy was he knew all too well: in a world so full of doubts he could not doubt his own doubt. He rather accepted orthodoxy and discipline even in their most abstruse and ridiculous forms. He could declare in all seriousness that manufactured little plastics showing Lenin in famous poses (pointing, writing, standing with hid hands in his pockets) "are the most significant sculptures (*Plastik*) which the most progressive country in the world has produced."[12] He could be utterly offended to find that in the Swiss press "it is absolutely forbidden to write that freedom rules in the Soviet Union; whoever tries to plead for objectivity is called an agent of Stalin."[13] I once saw on his table Lenin's book against neo-positivism — a subject Lenin surely did not understand and with which he dealt for purely factional intra-Party reasons. I said: "Brecht, you don't have to waste your time; if you want to keep your respect for Lenin, don't read it." He grew very angry and put me in my place: "If it was worth Lenin's while to write it, it must be worth my time to read it." He had a totally reverential attitude to the sacred writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, whom he always called "the classics," and even to the encyclicals of the sacred councils of the Comintern. After Hitler had come to power, I suggested that a discussion of the causes of our defeat was the first requirement for a comeback; he pointed to a resolution of the Central Committee which called the collapse of the labor movement an orderly retreat, and said: "How can we have suffered a defeat if we did not even fight?" Such sophistries were common when it was necessary to save face for the Party.

Would a man do so much, and as we shall see, more for a party to which he

11. *Selected Poems*, edited by H.R. Hays (Evergreen, 1959), p. 19.
12. *Schriften zur Literatur und Kunst II* (Frankfurt, 1967), p. 76.
13. *Diary*, August 19, 1948.

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does not belong? He has denied under oath that he ever was a member, and that may well be true in a technical sense:[14] like Arthur Koestler and other writers who might be more useful in their capacity of fellow travelers, he may have been asked to avoid formal membership. But his collaborator and companion, Grete Steffin, a member of long standing, was also his political commissar.

I come now to the fifth period, that of exile. To many refugees, even those that were not communists, the Soviet Union appeared as the strongest and most reliable opponent of Hitler. To a person like Benjamin it was sacrilegious even to doubt the wisdom or sincerity of Stalin. Brecht's diaries reflect the struggle between Benjamin and Korsch for Brecht's soul. Brecht at the time had difficulties with the Party, especially with the communist culture popes in Moscow: Andreé Zhdanov, Alfred Kurella, and Georg Lukacs, who were committed to "socialist realism" and rejected Brecht's epic theater. A brief visit to Moscow had convinced Brecht that these people were very middle-class sentimentalists and that his archenemy Stanislavsky ruled the stage. He took residence in Denmark. When war overtook him in Scandinavia, he travelled all the way through Siberia, to Hollywood, the Babylon of capitalist sinfulness, rather than stay in the Fatherland of the Workers.

Moreover, like Korsch, Brecht was not happy with the Popular Front tactics which the Comintern adopted in 1934. In his view, it blurred the class fronts and raised illusions among the workers. At the great writers' congress in the Paris Mutualité, 1935, which was supposed to enlist democratic intellectuals in the common cause, he read an appeal to overthrow capitalism first, after which Nazism would disappear of itself. He needed to see the world in black and white: on one side decadent, corrupt capitalism with its two helpers, the Social Democrats and the Fascists; on the other side the Soviet Union, virtue and the workers of the world. This had been the Communist Party's view until 1934, and it had been responsible for the disastrous disunity of the left that facilitated Hitler's rise to power. When the Comintern, finally at its 7th World Congress, abandoned this pernicious theory and the Soviet Union sought an alliance with France, Brecht held on to the view that fascism was nothing but a running dog of capitalism. Comparing the Nazi system with traditional capitalism, he found the former only "relatively worse"[15] and in certain respects he even admired its greater efficiency and its "radicalism" which pleases him better than social democratic reform policies: "The Hitler regime is self-reliant capitalism; its policies are radical. Hitler's criticism of the Social-Democrats and of the Frankfurt School is excellent." In the ridiculous play about "The Stoppable Rise of Arturo Ui" he tries to show that nothing distinguishes gangsters, capitalists and Nazis from each other.[16]

14. HUAC, October 30, 1947. Appendix to Ewen, *op.cit.*

15. *Diary*, June 29, 1941.

16. In Comintern language, all this was "ultra-left" and had Brecht been a member of the party, he might then have been expelled. Eisler had then sympathy for Doriot, who seceded from the party in 1935 and later became a fascist.

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Other plays of the exile period, also, suffer from his inability to differentiate between democratic and fascist methods of control. The most he will admit is that "the one conceals the violent aspects of the economy, the other conceals the economic nature of violence (December 15, 1940). This dogmatic Leninism carried over into the post-war period when he opined that "to de-Nazify the Germans one will have to de-bourgeoisify them" — a view which caused him to side with the East against the West Germans.

Some good plays present needless difficulties for the viewer because of a conflict between the author's healthy dramatic instincts and the shallow sociology he feels obliged to work into the play. Thus *Mother Courage*, which appears as a moving exaltation of vitality in a suffering woman, was meant to show the insensitivity of a capitalist hawker; the 30-years' war, of which the play shows an episode, was "the first capitalistic war," he explained.[17] He thought war, in particular "this war is the finest flower of capitalism so far, its last word, its purified, best version" (April 14, 1941). And remembering that Lenin had rejected the notion of war guilt in 1914, he denied that Hitler was to blame for starting the war in 1939 any more than "capitalism." Reading my essay on the structure of the German war economy, he almost triumphantly exclaimed: "It shows that the trusts have gained the upper hand over the state" (August 28, 1943), and when England was fighting its lonely battle against the rising tide of totalitarianism, he commented that they were only quarreling about the spoils (December 15, 1940 and January 20, 1941). A report on the American economy, dating back to pre-Pearl Harbor conditions, elicited the following confused, but highly significant speculations which foreshadow the post-war theories of convergence: "The similarities between the two great movements, fascism and bolshevism, emerge better than their dissimilarities — planned economies, authoritarian states, all-powerful parties, be it in parliaments or in civil military formations, the revolutionary forms, the hierarchies, the police systems, the propaganda methods, the myths, the waves of terror — the difference is, however, that this centralization is carried out by different classes." And he adds: "Perhaps the fascist counterrevolution can *erledigen*: [finish in the double sense of terminating and completing] that dark phase which might embarrass the proletariat. All that can be done better by corporations than by Soviets" (October 27, 1941). Similar thoughts are expressed when reading Souvarin's book on Stalin (July 1, 1943) and again after the war (January 26, 1949). This shows that Brecht was quite aware of the "dark" side of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Brecht's relationship with the Party in those years of comparative isolation can best be gauged from two of his most personal works. One is the moving *Ballad on the Origin of the Book Tao Te King*, in which the exiled sage writes down, at the request of a publican, the essence of his wisdom: that the soft will overcome the hard. The second is the play, *Life of Galilei*, which shows how the great scientist does not dare to defy the church but secretly continues

17. *Material en zu Mutter Courage* (Frankfurt, 1964), pp. 86-90.

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to pursue his studies. Asked whether he meant to say that Galilei's recantation was a tactical maneuver intended to permit him to write the two great dialogues, Brecht said, no, the man is crave. Privately he said that it would have been better for Galilei not to recant, confident that someone would discover the foundations of physics anyway. But he did not put that opinion into the play.[18] For, despite his difficulties, he needed the Party more than ever. The deeper reason was revealed to me in one memorable conversation.

I went to see him about the Moscow trials. We were at a crisis point in the Popular Front and at the height of the Spanish Civil War, in which the Soviet Union was heavily engaged. The trials, in this situation, were extremely embarrassing to the Left, and I said to Brecht: "You are one of the few people who might be listened to in Moscow; could you not speak up?" His answer was amazing. He said: "In fifty years people will have forgotten Stalin; but I want Brecht's plays still to be performed then, and therefore I must stay with the Party." So that was it. At that time I did not know that Brecht had in his desk drawer the autobiographical stories of Herr Keuner, whom he describes as "without backbone. I of all people must outlive violence."[19] He also, at about the same time, showed Korsch a poem in which Stalin was compared to an ox that does much useful work and therefore is given special food.[20] He liked to call Stalin "the useful one." (He also is mentioned in Benjamin's diary.)

Brecht was convinced that communism would emerge as the heir of European culture, and he wanted to be there to share the future. He could not bear missing the bus of history. Therefore he had to be with Stalin when Stalin was in the driver's seat. He had learned the lesson of historical inevitability all too well, much beyond his mentors' intentions. When Korsch pointed out to him how Stalin discredited the cause of socialism, he answered that one must distinguish between government and society. Like Trotsky at the time, he felt that Stalin would disappear and socialism remain; therefore, the defense of the Soviet Union had priority.

He defended Stalin's mock trials in public (*MeTi*, pp. 113-114)[21] though in private he mourned the disappearance of his friends, the actress Carola Neher[22] and the poet Sergei Tretyakov, his translator.[23] He continued to see some dissidents who had not made their peace with Western democracy. But in parables and arguments he keeps repeating to them his fundamental conviction that freedom is not an eternal value but a petit-bourgeois prejudice.[24] Productivity is everything; Stalin's personality cult is explained as a deliberate device to increase productivity.[25] Like a new Machiavelli, he

18. Esslin, *op.cit.*, pp. 158, 226; Ewen, *op.cit.*, p. 340.
19. As quoted by Ewen, *op.cit.*, p. 340.
20. *Merkur*, no. IX (1973).
21. *Prosa V* (Frankfurt, 1965). Though *MeTi* was unfinished, it was destined for publication.
22. *Arbeitsjournal, op.cit.*, p. 36.
23. Ewen, *op.cit.*, p. 327.
24. *MeTi, The Book of Changes, Prosa V* (Frankfurt, 1965), p. 9.
25. *MeTi, op.cit.*, p. 89.

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asserts that in all history "the beneficial institutions were created by crooks, while not a few virtuous people stood in the way of progress."[26] Later, when Bruno Bettelheim published his observations on the concentration camp, his diary (September 20, 1944) burst out: "Interesting: the vanishing of individuality.... Such descriptions should interest liberals who hold on to the notion of personality and who protest against the suppression of personal freedom in the Soviet Union."

The analysis of the Stalin regime which Brecht confided to his diary and even to *MeTi* for publication at a later date, differed in nothing from Trotsky's: a regime that had begun as a revolutionary dictatorship but had fallen into the hands of bureaucrats. Yet, he refused to draw Trotsky's conclusions, and in *MeTi*, his book of political aphorisms, he sided with Stalin even while admitting to Benjamin that the time to withdraw confidence had not come — yet.[27]

His confidence in the Soviet Union did receive a severe shock when Stalin allied himself with Hitler. His diary notes that Erika Mann, another political commissar, expects the Soviet Union to intervene on the side of the Western powers; it gives off a pained scream when instead the Russian hyena takes her share of murdered Poland; but then consoles himself almost jubilantly: "Hitler's war aim has been taken away from him. The Soviet army marches into Europe" (September 19, 1939). Nevertheless, he is disappointed that Stalin does not conduct the war as a revolutionary war, calling upon the peoples to rise; instead of creating Soviets he used Pan-Slav propaganda, Brecht notes scornfully. In winter, when Stalin invades Finland, he wonders "whether the loss of sympathy among the world proletariat is worth the military advantages" (December 24, 1939). Loss of sympathy! Brecht transforms an act of intellectual treason into a tactical mistake. Stalin still enjoys his "critical support." But Brecht preferred to sit the war out in America.

After the war, Brecht went to East Germany, not without prudently arranging for Austrian citizenship and assigning the rights to all his past and future works to a West German publisher. The East German government, following a shrewd pattern throughout the satellite empire, spent considerable sums to attract writers and artists and to keep them happy. Non-communists like Arnold Zweig and Heinrich Mann went to live in East Berlin; they received comfortable villas at a time when workers had no coal to heat their homes. Brecht was given a lavish budget to organize a theater, the

26. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

27. In *MeTi*, Brecht gave an adequate account of Korsch's anti-Stalinist views (p. 140) but rejected his conclusions. Then he says (p. 142): "Under the leadership of [Stalin] an industry without exploiters was developed in the Soviet Union; farming was collectivized and industrialized.... [Trotsky] denied all progress in [the Soviet Union], even those that were obvious. Outside [the Soviet Union] those who challenged the leadership of [Stalin] were soon isolated; those who challenged him at home soon saw themselves surrounded by criminals and committed crimes against the people. In [the Soviet Union] all wisdom was devoted to construction and chased from politics. Outside [the Soviet Union] anyone who praised the merits of [Stalin], even those that were undeniable, was suspected of corruption." For further rejection of Korsch's libertarian socialism, cf. p. 147.

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Berlin Ensemble, which became one of the foremost acting companies of the post-war period. Obviously, it had to produce "epic theater" — for a reason that transcended his theory of art, or, if one prefers, that was at the heart of that theory. For Brecht could have no illusions about the regime they were installing in East Berlin. Even before he went there, he had jotted in his diary: "Since we had no revolution, we may have to incorporate the Russian model — I think [with] shuddering" (December 26, 1947). He knew, and hated, the new culture czars: Becher, Bredel, and Kurella; besides being Stalinists, they also were nationalistic — an abomination to Brecht. It is a miracle that the inevitable frictions between Brecht and the Moscow-trained stalwarts did not end in a public showdown; but both sides avoided it — the others because they knew that Brecht was their greatest cultural asset, and he because he hoped, through the institution of the epic theater, through the young actors and playwrights whom he trained, to plant a time bomb: a theater that would not allow its audience to settle down in complacent conformity but would force it to think, to debate, to scrutinize reality, eventually to take its rightful place in the building of socialism.

He went deliberately into the position of the sage who wrote the book *Tao Te King*. One parable in the book *MeTi*, which was published many years after Brecht's death, illustrates this. A painter has sold to peasants a picture which they did not like but bought because they were sorry for him. Asked why they still had it, they answered: "The picture is as obtrusive as the painter. It hangs there and talks. It would yell if it were to be removed. It seems to fight. It is even intolerant and challenges the other pictures."[28]

When the East German workers became impatient with the regime and in June 1953 rose against arbitrarily imposed work rules, Brecht did not openly support them but lent his public support to the government, while pleading behind the scene that "workers who demonstrated for justified complaints [should] not be placed on the same footing as provocateurs" and that "the errors committed on all sides should be honestly debated."[29] He was impatient with the East German workers who failed to understand the "people's state in the form of dictatorship." But, at the same time, he wished that the dictatorship would engage the workers in a dialogue and explain itself.

Later he wrote two poems. which were included in his "works" only after his death. The first says:

> "After the uprising of the 17th of June
> The Secretary of the Writers' Union
> Had leaflets distributed in the Stalinallee
> In which one could read that the People
> Had forfeited the confidence of the Government
> Which it could only retrieve
> By a redoubled effort.
> Would it then not really be simpler

28. *MeTi*, *op.cit.*, p. 132.
29. Ewen, *op.cit.*, p. 453.

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If the Government dissolved the People
And elected another?" [30]

But the other poem objects to the exploitation of his difficulties by jeering Westerners:

"Easy, my pretty ones.
Close upon the Judas kiss for the workers
Follows the Judas kiss for the artists.
The firebug carrying a gasoline can
Is approaching
The Academy of Arts with a broad grin....
Even the most straightened foreheads
Where dwell thoughts of peace
Are more welcome to the arts than that friend of the arts
Who is also a friend of the arts of war." [31]

Brecht spoke up for greater freedom of artistic expression; dissenters like Professor Wolfgang Harich counted him as a friend. He also continued to visit Korsch whenever the latter was in West Berlin.[32] But he would not have received the Stalin Prize for Peace in 1955 had not the Soviet authorities been convinced of his absolute loyalty. He steadfastly denied that he was "sitting between two stools"; but to one visitor he remarked, jokingly, that the chair he was sitting on was shaky.[33] He died before the Hungarian revolution could put his loyalty to another test. My guess is that he would not have gone West, the way some of his colleagues did after that new betrayal of socialist principles; for he had gone East when he had fewer illusions about the regime than they. And he honestly believed that the Western democracies, and in particular the West German government under Adenauer, were inciting subversion in the East in anticipation of that war which Stalin had averted so long. Brecht saw the Cold War-mongers mostly in the West.

But here was also a source of disagreement with his comrades in East

30. *Ibid.*, p. 454.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
32. Wolfdieter Rasch and Iring Fetscher (in the West German magazine *Merkur*, X, 1963 and XI, 1973) seem to exaggerate Korsch's influence. Brecht used Korsch as a check on his own ideas, and agreed with him on many negative points; but he drew opposite conclusions. Korsch was a Luxemburgist-syndicalist and in his later years highly critical of classical Marxism; Brecht was a Jacobin-Leninist and considered himself a Marxist. The one idea which he took from Korsch (and perhaps from Heinz Langerhans, a student of Korsch) appears in Brecht's diaries (and perhaps in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*) in a rather perverted, reified form: Brecht hoped that "productivity in the larger sense" might eventually supersede the rigidities of the proletarian dictatorship (*Diary*, March 7, 1941). This goes back to the Sorelian myth of productivity which bursts the fetters of the system, and here artistic productivity and love also are seen as revolutionary. But Brecht uses productivity in the mechanical sense I have indicated: Stalin promotes productivity, the capitalists inhibit productivity, Lukacs's criticism of Brecht is "not productive" (August 18, 1938 and October 16, 1943, in *MeTi*, p. 89). The East German government would get more production out of its workers if it would talk to them. —Incidentally, Ewen has the wrong date for Brecht's introduction to Korsch. I am in the position to say that this occurred only in 1929 — *after* the *Three Penny Opera*. Since Korsch was totally at odds with Western policy-makers in the 1950s, the friendship was not disturbed by the cold war. By contrast, he broke with Fritz Sternberg after the latter had become too anti-Soviet for Brecht's taste.
33. Ewen, *op.cit.*, p. 486.

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Germany. From his earliest utterances on he had been an opponent of war, of militarism, of nationalism in all its manifestations. He was deeply committed to peace, and while not adverse to the use of violence in a revolution, he was profoundly worried by the prospect that socialism could defeat capitalism not by revolution but by war. He looked with suspicion and anger at the revival of militarism in East Germany, at the nationalistic spirit propagated by some of his writer colleagues in East Berlin, at Bredel's and Becher's blood-and-soil lyrics, at the deliberate cultivation in East Germany of the heroic Prussian traditions. War and the spirit of war were for Brecht manifestations of that world that he had set out to overcome.

Brecht was forced (or persuaded) to omit from a new edition of the *Nome Breviary* a poem which speaks in unflattering terms of the Red Army, and to change the ending of *The Trial of Lucullus* from a pacifist to an anti-Western significance. The collaboration between him and the East German authorities was uneasy, but we cannot doubt that both sides felt that it was productive. Brecht considered himself a soldier of the revolution, and for him as a Marxist, that was indissolubly tied to the Eastern system of planned economy. He looked with contempt at intellectuals who split because they felt righteous about the failings of that system. He knew that he was not a socialist writer and had no hope of participating in that socialist future which still was lying beyond present expectations. He was, according to his own definition (August 5, 1940) a bourgeois writer who had made the cause of the proletariat his own. Their common aim was to "wipe all proletarian features from the face of humanity." He knew that the actual proletarians were far from seeing this goal; they had left him in the lurch badly in 1945 when they failed to use the advance of the Russian armies to start a revolution of their own. They had failed him June 1953, when they followed demagogues, but on that occasion he confesses to have seen the "only force of the future." This was two years before his death. His last word was hope.

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Symposium on Narcissism:

THE CORTLAND CONFERENCE ON NARCISSISM*

by

John Alt and Frank Hearn

A conference on "Narcissism and the Crisis of Capitalism" was held April 3-5 at the State University of New York at Cortland. It was intended to contribute to the revitalization of intellectual life on campus and to come to a fuller appreciation of the dynamics of narcissism and their relation to advanced capitalism. The central questions raised were: Precisely what is narcissism? How does it differ from and what does it have in common with previous personality types associated with the development of capitalism (e.g., the entrepreneurial personality — the bourgeois "rugged individual," the authoritarian character, the inner-directed and other-directed self)? What are the historical and institutional preconditions of cultural and psychological narcissism? Is narcissism peculiar to advanced capitalism? What are the connections between parental authority, child-rearing practices, and narcissism? What are the political implications of narcissism?

The conference kicked off with an evening presentation by Russell Jacoby who had been told that his presentation was to serve two functions: as a continuing Lecture Board presentation for the college as a whole, and as the "keynote" talk for the narcissism conference. Given the character of the audience — undergraduate students and academics from outside who came specifically for the conference — Jacoby opted for a discursive and epigrammatic, rather than a purely scholarly presentation. His basic theme was that there was no determining relationship between narcissism and capitalism and, secondly, that "things are not getting better, and there is no going back." More generally, Jacoby did not try to present any definitive interpretation of the problem. This approach turned out to be bothersome especially for those expecting instant solutions.

Jacoby paid little attention to any theory of a "crisis of capitalism" Yes, there *is* a crisis of capitalism, he argued, but it has long since become a permanent one and cannot be expected to generate any political response necessary for social reconstruction. Although the crisis is real, it is also an ideological creation of the media. More importantly, further talk of crisis only fosters indifference and retreat into the self, so that it may be more fruitful to speak of a "crisis of narcissism." If capitalism is in a "permanent crisis," then this state is normal and rational for the system. Yet, in these contexts, the individual becomes abnormal and irrational, or narcissistic. As he put it, it is possible to speak of an inverse relation wherein a "healthy" capitalism fosters and is sustained by the personal crises manifested by narcissism. Jacoby sought to elaborate the historical versus the contemporary dimensions of narcissism, perhaps a reaction to the tendency to view narcissism as something emerging from the American 1970s. Narcissism, he argued, is both continuous and discontinuous with traditional bourgeois individualism. The fetishizing character of narcissism wherein the person projects self-images onto commodities and others as objects mirroring the

*This conference report was compiled with the help of Ron Butchart, David Craven, Jamie Faricellia, Colleen Kattau, John Marciano, Henry Steck, and Jerry Surette.

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self, has always been a distinguishing trait of bourgeois culture. On the other hand, what seems new about the phenomenon is the widespread lack of love and interest in intimate others, reflected in extended singlehood, dissolving marriages, childless marriages, and casual relationships in general. Jacoby focused on the loss of interest in children by married couples (especially by professionals), a phenomenon reflective of economic rationality but also of psychically impoverished people who only wish to spend time on themselves. Unlike the bourgeoisie, who eagerly identified with their children, the dominant tendency in the new middle class is to withdraw from other persons.

Scattered throughout the presentation was an analysis of narcissism paralleling that of the Frankfurt School and Lasch. Consumerism, the companionate family, and the new army of social management experts have helped to restructure social relations consistent with the economic and political requirements of capitalism. Yet, the liberalization of normative and coercive authority signified by these social changes has not brought forth a new individuality, autonomy or freedom. On the contrary, these changes bring forth a more isolated individual who repressively sublimates hedonistic desires through the logic of consumer gratification and professional management. Yet, the historical reality of the old bourgeois individual was not necessarily an ideal one, either. Where authority was rooted in the entrepreneur and the father, the imposition and internalization of normative authority too often created psychically repressed and crippled individuals. On the other hand, in one of the few optimistic moments of his talk, Jacoby argued that the significance of internalized morality and sacrifice is that it provided a standard with which to achieve distance from and thus the possibility of evaluating the social world. He concluded that there is no conclusion. Critical theory, like the social and psychic realities of contemporary capitalism, is also at an impasse.

Given such a presentation, it is not surprising that there were no passionate questions, retorts or attacks from the audience in the subsequent discussion. Jacoby had somehow captured the most significant and apparently contradictory interpretations and jelled them into an ambivalent yet coherent whole. Yet, a number of questions were raised from the audience. Given Jacoby's emphasis on secondary narcissism, someone questioned the utility of the psychoanalytic approach. This led to a discussion concerning the significance of the concept of superego (or ego ideal) and its role in structuring both obedience and disobedience.

Two other questions reflected pessimism as well as optimism. The first reacted to Jacoby's pessimism, asking why speak on a topic if there is nothing positive about it. Jacoby responded that there are no maps. There are, of course, many and diverse political groupings doing specialized and partial work. They are worthwhile but limited in that they do not coalesce into any larger movement. The other questioner sought to defend narcissism as a defensive mechanism for survival. Jacoby agreed with the claim, but rejected any easy strategy to deal with the problem. A final question asked if there were any counter trends to narcissism as manifested, e.g., in the current "war fever" and the mobilization of nationalist sentiment. Jacoby replied that, notwithstanding the narcissist tendency, there remains an ethic of sacrifice mobilizable by the state. Thus, there are no counter-tendencies, but at best only residues from bourgeois and liberal culture alongside opposing narcissistic tendencies.

The setting for the remaining speakers was different from that of Jacoby's. The following day Aronowitz, Ewen, and Kovel spoke in the more formal context of the conference with discussants who mostly had read the papers in advance. This panel structure worked quite well, especially since for the remaining five presentations,

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participation narrowed down to between 40 to 60 people.

Aronowitz dealt with the relation between instrumental reason and the new illiteracy. He had no prepared paper and thus gave an extemporaneous talk (which seemed more his style) dealing with the themes of a previous article of his, a spirited defense of the narcissism phenomenon, and a hard-hitting rejection of Lasch's work. In contrast to Jacoby's low-keyed, satirical style and equivocating acceptance of the Lasch thesis, Aronowitz provided a strong defense of narcissism (especially in terms of working class efforts at self-representation through mass culture). While his rambling thoughts on the eclipse of reason and the new illiteracy were meant primarily for the discussants (who were anticipating such a presentation), they also introduced Aronowitz's interpretation of critical theory. For Aronowitz, in capitalist society the instrumentalization of reason prevails over the normative and the sensuous spirit. In the context of education, this means advocating the subversion of critical reason in favor of a technocratic orientation or vocationalization, thus effectively reproducing capitalist relations.

Unable to connect the Frankfurt School thesis of the eclipse of reason to the theme of the conference, Aronowitz quickly shifted to a criticism of Lasch's work. He argued that capitalism had entered a new stage that reversed earlier patterns of growth and signaled a major legitimation crisis. Thus, it is imperative for the ruling class to re-establish older relations or moral justifications of authority in the face of its decline. Where is the state to find this new moral or ideological legitimation? Aronowitz claimed that Lasch's work inadvertently provides this moral legitimation. The problem with Lasch is that he analyzes narcissism from an antiquated liberal perspective that stresses repressive authority, work discipline, and self-sacrifice. Lasch's refurbished version of liberalism, appearing at a time of profound dislocations, provides a justification for austerity while emphasizing the need for subordination to authority. Thus, rather than providing a critique of capitalism, Lasch's work fits nicely into the legitimation crisis. Further, Aronowitz argued that Lasch's work was the expression of middle-class intellectuals' guilt about consumerism and hedonism sublimated into an emphasis on the traditional work ethic, deferred gratification, and mobility.

According to Aronowitz, a defense of narcissism is in order, not of its psychoanalytic, but of its cultural version. Allegedly, the clinical approach to narcissism only reveals a bourgeois preoccupation with the threat to work discipline and state authority In contrast, cultural narcissism is best understood as the "great refusal": a call for sensory enjoyment in a technological universe, and the desire for an empowered self in a one-dimensional environment. Arguing from a literal Marcusean perspective, Aronowitz saw narcissism as a liberating force. In the context of monopoly capitalism's economic growth, hedonistic narcissism fits the logic of social reproduction. In the new context of economic downturn, when the state needs to impose austerity measures, however, such hedonistic self-expression is progressive.

Moving to mass culture, Aronowitz exemplified his account through boxing. Among working class males, watching boxing on television is another form of spectacle. Yet, it is also an attempt at *re*-presentation of an affirmative image of power. It is both logical and emancipatory for such people to be absent from work to vicariously enjoy themselves as powerful subjects. This hedonistic self-indulgence breaks the yoke of capitalist discipline by the projection of the sensuous self as an object of power. Through such spectacles, working class people are able to escape the internalized alienation of bourgeois culture. Analyses of these phenomena grounded in either traditional bourgeois culture or transhistorical theoretical models

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(e.g., psychoanalysis), as in Lasch's work, can only be repressive. Intellectuals, teachers, and organizers should begin with and respect the daily experience of ordinary people interpreted as protest and not as the feeble acts of a dying social order.

Since Aronowitz had not sent his paper to the discussants, their comments did not directly relate to his talk. The first discussant refused to give any instant analysis and simply agreed with Aronowitz that Lasch's work was irrelevant to working people busy struggling to make ends meet. The second reiterated the importance of the critique of instrumental reason in education and of a Gramscian counter-hegemonic struggle. The critical educator's task is to transcend "common sense" conceptions that students bring to schools by leading them to reflect upon their superficial views of reality. He saw implicit in Aronowitz's remarks the notion that people in the university may have a more coherent understanding of the world than others. Because of the debilitating impact of the instrumentalization of reason, teaching the skills of critical reason is crucial.

The first question from the audience dealt with the differences between Lasch's and Marcuse's analysis of narcissism. Aronowitz replied that Lasch's concept of narcissism differs from Marcuse's in that the self is locked entirely into consumer society. Lasch makes consumerism identical with narcissism, and sees it as part of the entropy of moral order. Marcuse does not reassert older liberal values and does not make necessity into a virtue. There is no refusal in Lasch's work and he does not believe in narcissism posing any threat to the existing order. Lasch believes the existing order must be maintained because it constitutes the only morality we have. The questioner responded that Marcuse's concept of narcissism embodies the great refusal, but its current cultural expression does not. He further argued against Aronowitz that Lasch is not forgetting the working class, and indeed urges the American Left to return to it. Aronowitz disagreed and argued that Lasch wants to re-establish authority on a repressive basis by denying the significance of hedonism and self-representation in favor of discipline and denial. A final question pointed out the apparent disparity between critical theory and daily life, and asked how theory can relate to the lives of ordinary people. Aronowitz responded that the university is an integral part of the real world and that critical theory does link up there with broader social realities. Yet, he never moved beyond the position that intellectuals should "validate" working class experience. On the whole, Aronowitz sought to uphold a traditional view of capitalism and an alienated working class spiced with the critical theory of Horkheimer and Marcuse in terms of which both hedonism and intellectual leadership are necessary forms of political practice.

Following Aronowitz, Ewen presented a very different view of mass culture, arguing that narcissism and mass culture are two sides of a project of capitalist hegemony. Historically, consumerism has undermined traditional group bonds in favor of the satisfaction of needs. The other side of this social process of solipsistic gratification is the mass cultural coordination by the culture industries. In other words, the massification of culture by the culture industry presupposes and fosters the fragmentation of social life. While ideologically interpreted as a new freedom from traditional dependencies, the atomized self is dependent upon new forms of authority and cultural unification that bind the person into the collective social relations of capitalism.

According to Ewen, the idiom of much contemporary mass culture is shifting from the narcissistic sensibilities of the privatized self to a "moral economy of war." As American society enters a new historical period of economic decline and inter-

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national geopolitical hostilities, the symbolic messages of the media are offering new terms of unification. Specifically, the chaos of everyday life is represented as a political need for patriotism, self-denial, and war hysteria where these militaristic metaphors function to integrate the chaotic person into a new social collective.

Contrary to Aronowitz's stress on the self-actualizing, resistance, or rebellious interpretation of mass culture, Ewen argued that mass culture is a powerful instrument of ideological hegemony. For the left to deny this hegemony in favor of "there-must-be-resistance-arguments" is to succumb to a foolish optimism which can only obscure the political control that the media exercises. Such a position, he continued, only gives credence to liberal pluralism while furthering the very control function of the spectacle. In contrast, resistance must follow from an understanding of the media's hegemonic functions and challenged in alternative cultural terms. In short, the "validation" of people's ordinary mass cultural experiences must be in terms other than those proferred by the spectacle.

The commentators both felt that Ewen's model of society was linear. One emphasized that many of his ad examples dealt with women, implying that there is no avenue of maturity open to them. The other commentator rejected his view of the masses which only posits a narcissistic, alienated society. Given their alienation which Ewen portrays as total, it is easy for the society of the spectacle to reorganize them in terms of new social, rather than private, images. One commentator argued that narcissism might mitigate against the new "moral economy of war" tendencies in mass culture as such individuals are likely to be immune to patriotic images defending institutions remote to the self. Ewen's own examples of self-denial and national duty provide contradictory evidence. For instance, despite state efforts to rebuild a Cold War spirit, reinstitution of the draft is running into stubborn resistance and ROTC programs continue to meet hostile receptions from college students. Also, the effort to direct anger over energy and inflation onto the Arabs seems to have failed, as did public opinion over the issue of national support for the Olympic boycott well before the USOC capitulated to political pressure.

One audience member strongly disagreed with the commentators. He argued that Ewen demonstrates that the transcendentally-integrating dimension of mass culture accounts not only for the hermeticism of much narcissism, but also for the way in which narcissism could possibly lead to a defense of "national interest" — an amplified version of narrow self-concern. In both cases, the chaos of society seems to require self-inclusiveness, whether in private affairs or on a national level. Alienation is the connecting link between narcissism and nationalism. Furthermore, the theory of hegemony is not constrictive and opens an alternative discourse on everyday life and mass culture which obviates the false conclusiveness that comes from the "resistance" interpretation. Ewen's analysis, even if discursive and interpretive, was seen as necessary to undermine capitalism's ordered representation of chaos.

The final presentation of the day was Kovel's. He located the shift from normal to pathological narcissism with the spread of capitalist rationalization. Normal narcissism is an essential element of the self-formative process and receives expression both in the relations of the self to the outside (e.g., in terms of pride and dignity) and in relations of the self to itself (e.g., in matters of self-regard). More specifically, normal narcissism is constituted by the localization of desire shaped by the objects to which it is directed. To the extent that these objects are comprised of recognizable human beings embedded in secure, coherent, intimate relations, desire is internalized as a healthy narcissism which bridges the passage from infantile omnipotence (primary narcissism) to adult power. Pathological narcissism, with a posture

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of grandiose coldness which both hides an inner rage and prevents the affirmation of meaningful, committed, and enduring relations with others, arises ever more frequently from the de-sociation of the narcissistic character. Addressing the relation of pathological narcissism and the contemporary bourgeois family, Kovel observed the absence of overt trauma in the family background of pathological narcissists. Not overwhelming trauma but the de-sociated character of the parent-child bond appears as the decisive factor. The bourgeois family has collapsed and no longer exposes the child to a coherent pattern of behavior, nor does it provide an other in the form of a recognizable human being or cohesive human bonds that shield him from the penetration of capitalist rationalization.

Like Lasch, Kovel argued that late capitalism has invaded the bourgeois family and thereby violated the integrity of the parental object. The result is a de-sociated family producing de-sociated characters which assist in the reproduction of capitalist relations. Given these considerations, Kovel concluded, the task is to develop an adequate intermediary, one which (like Lasch's "communities of competence") appreciates both the stability of community and the secure, coherent, and intimate relations promised by the family. Thus, the solution is neither theraputic nor bureaucratic, but political and collective.

The discussion following Kovel's presentation concentrated on the exclusive focus on pathological narcissism — a disorder afflicting a miniscule portion of the population. Instead, more attention should be paid to adaptive narcissism which embodies the traits found in the narcissistic personality. Adaptive narcissism is not so much a sign of disordered individual development as it is of an adaptive response to the erosion of durable relationships, meaningful standards, and consensual values. It is less the inadvertent result of the collapse of the bourgeois family than a marketed product of bourgeois culture deprived of its privatistic core. Kovel responded by noting the difficulty involved in distinguishing pathological narcissism from adaptive narcissism. The former can be identified only in analysis and fits well with late capitalism. Nevertheless, Kovel recognized the pessimistic implications of the fact that the de-sociated character of the parent-child bond in upper-middle class families is increasingly found also in working-class American families. While this forebodes the growth of the narcissistic personality, Kovel insisted that at present pathological narcissism at least remains a middle-class phenomenon: a result of free-time or surplus subjectivity.

Finally, one discussant argued that, while narcissism may very well be a response to the loss of subjectivity and self generated by capitalist rationality, it is a *subjective* search for subjectivity. It is carried out not as a social project but as an individual journey, i.e., a de-sociated experience. The resulting boredom and restlessness are probably the forms taken by personal dissatisfaction when there is no movement to provide a collective articulation. Thus, they embody a defiance incapable of generating a collective rebellious sentiment against the established structures of authority. The defiant acts associated with adaptive narcissism — vandalism, perpetual partying, educational laziness and irresponsibility — are, of course, much less severe than the perversity, promiscuity, criminality, addition, and ineducability that Kovel linked to pathological narcissism. What they share is self-destructiveness: they are helpless responses to the experience of helplessness.

The first presentation on the last day was Elshtain's effort to redefine progressive change at a time when transformative possiblities remain dormant. In this context, the task is to find and sustain those ends which make up the ethic of public virtue. These ends, Elshtain argued, stand outside debased civil society and the political economy of utilitarian calculation upon which it rests. Transhistorical in character,

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they are to be rediscovered and cultivated to provide the ground for commitment. This account of the rediscovery and cultivation of transhistorical ends was both an extension as well as a critique of Lasch's analysis. Like Lasch, she emphasized the importance of moral discipline and echoed his argument that "a 'conservative' respect for order and authority has now become an essential ingredient of any radical movement." Yet, from Lasch's bleak portrait, Elshtain sought to cull progressive possibilities. Leaving aside the shop-worn prescriptions of the Old Left, the narcissistic thrust of the New Left, and Lasch's all-too-thin call for socialism, Elshtain found reconstructive forces in a variety of locations: traditional churches, the social gospel, traditional family structures, traditional definitions of femininity, the individualized but heroic search for form, the power of play and fantasy. Order, authority, moral discipline, historical continuity, the past as moral guide to the future — these are the stuff of public life where human selfhood is best realized.

Elshtain's presentations, however, raised several troubling questions: (1) Can these values associated with public virtue be concretely located or must they forever remain just plain "possibilities"? Can the partial political movements defended by Elshtain (e.g., the women of Love Canal) be anything more than partial? (2) Can "traditional values transform the existing order in a "liberal" society that lacks the tradition of a genuine social alternative on the style of the (much debased by now) English working class? (3) Can Lasch's and Elshtain's conservative and liberal values be recaptured from the dominant forces of order? These transcendent needs and values are not being met, argued the two discussants, even though now they could as never before. Thus, Elshtain's attempt to impose an "ought" remains abstract. It is not enough to identify possibilities. What is also required is some indication that they are actualizable.

When speaking of social change, Elshtain was reminded, it is important not to forget that possibility rests to a significant degree upon what our economy will afford. Monopoly capital today cannot deliver the goods. Nowadays, the growth of the collective social product is more apparent than real. This is, of course, stagflation. The crisis in subjectivity takes place within the objective crisis. Today, the politics of subjectivity is about to be pierced. To be sure, many of the actors in Elshtain's silver lining disavow the merely materialistic, but this disavowal is itself a product of capital. Can this ethic of non-materialism survive the erosion of its material base? In short, Elshtain's position was criticized for its utopian tendencies, for its effort to locate transformative and progressive forces in possibilities that remain free-floating and abstract. Thus, the critique of Elshtain partially converged with Piccone's assessment of the general theme of narcissism.

The last speaker, Piccone, presented a paper entitled "Narcissism after the Fall: What's on the Bottom of the Pool?" — a reference to the legend of Narcissis, who, overconcerned with his own image reflected in the water, fell into the lake where he met his demise. Responding to inquiries concerning the metaphorical title, Piccone stated that everyone knew what was on the bottom of the water: rusted beer cans, old worn-out shoes, and other junk, thus introducing his major thesis that narcissism was by itself inadequate to provide a social theory of late capitalism. Instead of an analysis of the psychological and cultural reflection, what is needed is a study of what the rusted beer cans and the old shoes are doing at the bottom of the lake. This was part of a broader analysis of the crisis of critical theory: the obsolescence of the historical problematic of defending or explaining the demise of bourgeois individuality and-or working class politics (a theme forcefully reintroduced by Lasch). Piccone reiterated his now familiar claim that critical theory's use

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of Freud allows for an uncritical and ultimately conservative entrenchment of Marxism. That is, the use of Freudian theory as either interpreting the destruction of the individual or as postulating an irreconcilable conflict between nature and culture perpetuates obsolete assumptions regarding the political potential of a long since deactivated working class. To the extent that the narcissism thesis pinpoints the destruction of individuality, then it is but a restatement of the Frankfurt School's "totally administered society" thesis in a context where even administration is failing. The substance of this theory captures, but does not go beyond, the logic of the transition from competitive to monopoly capitalism ushered in by the New Deal. Trapped in the reified categories of an earlier social period, the narcissism thesis can only evoke the normative culture and politics of that period (bourgeois morality and working class socialism). In such a context, any talk of the working class, workers' control, the class party, moral authority, the Freudian nature-culture conflict, or aesthetic sensibilities, among other things, is idealistic hope evoking a dead past rather than a living present.

Piccone argued that this uncritical recycling of traditional categories becomes appropriated by the very system it attempts to criticize. The narcissism thesis becomes part of that which it criticizes when its traditional categories and ideals are instrumentalized by others (e.g., Carter) to justify the restoration of the old morality in the face of the crumbling of existing social authority. Piccone sought a different theoretical articulation of the concept of the narcissistic individual. While such individuals are created by and useful for the reproduction of capitalist consumerism, they are increasingly dysfunctional for the formal efficiency of the bureaucratic apparatus. In contrast to Lasch's theory of the therapeutic and self-aggrandizing lobic of bureaucracy, Piccone emphasized the bureaucracy's core principle of formal rationality. The social problem is that the hedonistic individual is incapable of reproducing the formal rationality necessary to control and regulate corporate and governmental bureaucracies. In order to function effectively, the bureaucratic apparatus needs internal as well as external "checks and balances" provided by non-narcissistic individuals. Without this, bureaucracies become clumsy, unwieldly, inefficient, and perhaps dangerous forms of social organization. And to the extent that bureaucratic authority responds to the "irresponsibility" of the narcissist (as employee or client) with more bureaucratic regulations and safeguards, it increases, rather than reduces, the contradiction between the cultural narcissist and the organizational principles of formal rationality. The cultural narcissist has no interest in bureaucratic requirements for formal rationality and human involvement and resents efforts to formally regulate every dimension of activity. This contradiction can only lead to the increase of bureaucratic management and a worsening of the contradiction.

A related problem is that signified by the ending of the "historic compromise" (referring to the affluence and private individuality acquired by the working and middle classes during the rise of monopoly capitalism in return for their loss of control over work and politics). Specifically, monopoly capitalism has entered a new and seemingly permanent period of economic and fiscal crisis which will necessitate substantial social reconstruction. Piccone's all too sketchy, yet insightful, argument was that the system's own solution entails significant debureaucratization (especially of the state apparatus) and the corresponding need to reconstitute some individuality and a "public sphere" as alternative mechanisms of social order and control. It is probable, he argued, that the cultural narcissist, heavily dependent upon the bureaucracy, might resist the dismantling of the state apparatus. But, if so, narcissist

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self-interest further compounds the state's fiscal crisis and reconstruction efforts because of the former's claim to entitlements, such as the right to a job, income, and intense consumerism that allows for self-aggrandizement, prestige, and pleasure. It is also probable that the cultural narcissist is incapable of performing in any reconstituted public sphere in terms of either group loyalty or state-directed conceptions of the public interest.

Throughout his formal presentation and discussion Piccone sought to go beyond critical theory's traditional perspective and its theories of the "totally administered society," while briefly articulating new contradictions and political options. The two discussants were not too well prepared to deal with these theses. One gave a short overview of the problem of work and of the political significance of worker's control, re-stressing the Laschian thesis about the importance of reestablishing "communities of competence." The other raised a multitude of questions regarding the obsolesence of critical theory and the political role that intellectuals and the left can play within the new context. Two questions from the audience raised more philosophical issues concerning the use of phenomenology and alienation in current theoretical work. In general, many felt that he had failed to qualify sufficiently many of his sweeping generalizations and denunciations. One concern, central to both Horkheimer and Lasch (and Freud), was the relation between moral authority and individuality. As Lasch carefully argued, the demoralization of authority under state capitalism accentuates self-absorption and self-aggrandizement at the expense of social and moral individuality. Thus, if there is to be a new critical theory addressed to social contradictions and political options, it must be sensitive to the question of authority and morality both in the capitalist reconstruction of present society and in the left's challenge to that reconstruction. Further, the theory must be explicit about which values and ideals it wishes to preserve. If critical theory's traditional problematic is now obsolete, if not regressive, this does not mean that a new critique can dispense with the question of authority or moral ideals. This concern obviously relates to such matters as the reconstitution of the public sphere, of any new individuality, the reorganization of work, the form of leisure and sports, the character and pedagogy of education, the role and importance of the family, some new specification of democratic socialism, and the very idea and role of the left itself.

Another issue discussed was that critical theory's concern with individuality and the eclipse of the individual was rooted not only in a concern with the preservation of Marxism, but also in a broader concern for the conditions under which individuals could exercise their own reason and freedom without the external mediation of either state capitalism or an authoritarian left party. Any attempt at a new critical theory must simultaneously concern itself with the actual or potential conditions under which individuals attempt some reappropriation of reified reason and freedom. This means, concretely, a sensitivity to the partial interests and demands of socially-fragmented groups and movements who, unwittingly or not, either aid or resist capitalism's crisis and the state's new efforts at social reconstruction. If, as Jacoby argued, capitalism has entered a period of permanent crisis, Piccone suggested that critical theory is itself part of that crisis, the solution to which is not the continual recycling of concepts formulated in earlier phases of capitalist crisis.

It is difficult to assess the theoretical and political impact that the conference had for either the critical theory of narcissism itself or the speakers and participants. Jacoby, Ewen, and Kovel stressed the importance of the theory of narcissism for an understanding of bourgeois society generally and late capitalism specifically. Among these three, this went hand in hand with their more apparent affinity with

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traditional critical theory, especially its central thesis regarding the demise of the individual and the disastrous implications this holds for either liberal or radical politics. In this regard it is not surprising that none of the three undertook any systematic critique of Lasch, although both Jacoby and Ewen did criticize Lasch's heavy moralizing tendency.

On the other side stood Aronowitz and Piccone who, for very different reasons, rejected the critical theory of narcissism as inadequate for a theory of late capitalism. While grounded in a relatively orthodox Marxist version of critical theory, Aronowitz reaffirmed his Marxism by defending narcissism as the self-constituting hedonism of an alienated social class. For him the contradiction between narcissism and capitalism is one dimension of the crisis of capitalism which must be politically validated rather than morally tabooed. Piccone, carefully distancing himself from this position, likewise tried to pinpoint new contradictions but on the level of social structures rather than repressed or emancipating individuals. For Piccone, it seemed that neither a normative nor social theory of the individual was decisive for an understanding of the new dynamics of late capitalism. Elshtain stood between both camps, grounded neither in Marxism or critical theory, but in a critical liberalism emphasizing the importance of tradition (in the manner of Lasch but also the Frankfurt School), and the political significance of diverse groups constituting themselves in the present (in the manner of Aronowitz but without class overtones).

For those with either scholarly or political interests in the question of narcissism or capitalism, there were sure to have been old questions answered and new questions raised. Such, of course, is the function of conferences. Some may have been disappointed in the apparent disunity or diversity of the six speakers, expecting or hoping instead for some decisive diagnosis of the collective chaos of American life. It was, however, the very diversity of perspectives among the six speakers, discussants and audience that gave the conference its strength.

NARCISSISM AND THE CRISIS OF CAPITALISM

by Russell Jacoby

Talk of crisis rings false. We are drenched in crises. We have perpetual crises in foreign affairs, housing, education, and energy sources; we have crises of inflation, medical care and costs, public transportation, affirmative action, family disorganization, child abuse, occupational safety; this hardly exhausts the list. Moreover, these crises only provide the background for daily and personal life.

This life itself is increasingly composed of emergencies and crises squeezed together by a vise of catnage and violence. Distant bombings, starvation and miseries are part of the nightly TV fare. No resident of any large American city, no reader of the daily press can avoid the numerous and horrifying accounts of the local murders, shootings, dismemberments and accidents. To dwell on these reports is to risk numbness. Exponents of growth and self-realization notwithstanding, to flourish, even to function in this society, requires a shell of coldness.

Talk of crises may today be ideological; it adds to the din, and encourages, if not

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compels, further retreat and flight. Another crisis is one too many. No one can pay attention. A disintegrating social order may breed not only revolution but passivity.

"Narcissism and the Crisis of Capitalism," does not escape the general fate. At best it expresses the perennial Marxist hope, the imminence of the crisis of capitalism. Unfortunately, the inverse is more accurate: Capitalism and the crisis of narcissism. As a social category, narcissism — the narcissistic society — suffers from the danger of personalizing the impersonal. Political and economic power is sublimated into individual pathology, as if the traits of a character and not the economy were the evil.

Nor does this exhaust the flaws of the theory of narcissism conscripted for a critical social analysis. A conservative, if not reactionary, atmosphere clings to the critique of narcissism. It hints of past and better times, when people were less self-obsessed. It alludes to an epoch when a patriarch ruled a sound and healthy family; and this family turned out morally and psychically tought egos. The decay of the patriarchal family signalled the onset of the new narcissism: so goes the argument. In brief, the critique of narcissism is suspected of secreting a love of authority. It honors patriarchal authority, and bemoans its decline. The term "permissive" society similarly suggests an affection for obedience, and families and societies which did not spare the rod or gallows.

Yet social theories which sever all links to conservatism risk blindness to present and past. In different terms, theories which have interpreted history as one-way streets of progress have themselves deteriorated into public relations for the contemporary individual, family, or culture. Edward Shorter's *The Making of the Modern Family* closes basking in the vision of the "free-floating couple" with "relatives hovering in the background, friendly smiles on their faces."[1] Modernization theories, and this includes varieties of Marxism, are cleansed of the taint of conservatism by washing out their color and substance. The cheerleaders of the future know the cheerless past only by the trophies of the winners.

Psychoanalysis, the theoretical sources of the critique of narcissism, also provokes the charge of conservatism. While Freud was hardly a political radical, the allegation is largely inspired by the theories and practices of later psychoanalysts. That Freud was unimpressed by historical change, may be due less to his yearnings for the past than his premonitions of the future as more of the same. To burden the theory with the deceit of social change is to aid the deceivers, not the revolt.

In any case, psychoanalysis did register changes that the psyche underwent, as the popularity of narcissism in contemporary psychoanalytic literature testifies.[2] Towards the end of Freud's career, psychoanalysts commented that "classic" patients of Freud had been inflicted with distinct neurotic symptoms, such as hysteria or hand-washing fetishes. The newer patients suffered more diffuse symptoms and complaints. Wilhelm Reich, describing this phenomenon, introduced the terms character analysis and character disorder. Where analysts had once seen neurotic *symptoms,* they now saw neurotic *characters.* Character disorders suggested less a specific impairment than general patterns and behaviors.

The practical and theoretical consequences of character disorders were far ranging. The patient felt the neurotic symptom as a "foreign body," and feeling ill sought medical or psychological relief.[3] The patient with a character disorder did

1. Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York, 1977), p. 280.
2. See Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York, 1979), pp. 87 ff.
3. Wilhelm Reich, "On Character Analysis," (1928) in *The Psychoanalytic Reader,* R. Fliess, editor (New York, 1973), p. 109.

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not suffer from a discrete symptom; hardly feeling ill, he or she was not motivated to seek relief or insight into the disorder.

What makes the patient with a character disorder a patient at all? In fact, this, as well as the related question — when is analysis terminated? — reveal the inner limits of psychoanalysis. The theory of the individual becomes a theory of society. The psychoanalytic theory of narcissism is entangled in the same web. Narcissism is a character disorder, often surfacing with such vague symptoms as "emptiness" and "futility." Moreover, the narcissistic patient is often not dysfunctional but well adjusted. Otto Kernberg comments that the narcissistic patient who is successful in professional life often appears to himself and others as perfectly normal.[4] This confesses, without admitting, that the character disorder is not an individual, but a social disorder.

If psychoanalysts registered the relative decrease of the "classic" symptoms of neurotic compulsions, and relative increase of character disorders, few speculated on the reasons for this change in traffic. Otto Genichel, an exception, reasoned that classic neurosis was formed under the impact of simple repressions and prohibitions. A social environment of strict taboos bred clear-cut sexual neuroses. A liberalization of morality and sexual ethics in the course of the twentieth century transformed the raising of children. An inconsistent, looser, and shifting series of sexual commandments and taboos no longer yielded well-defined neurotic compulsions.[5]

Contemporary psychoanalytic theorists confirm that narcissism does not derive from specific childhood traumas. No fantasy (or reality) of an uncle, who has seduced or raped the mother before the eyes of the child, lies at the root of narcissism. Rather, an entire upbringing and atmosphere is involved. According to Heinz Kohut, the most common etiology of narcissism is the personality of the parents; they themselves are narcissistic. With their children, they are cold, distant, and uninterested. Narcissistic parents breed narcissistic children.[6]

A liberalized sexual code and behavior restructures the psyche. The end of chaperoned dating and courtship, approval of pre-marital sexuality, availability of automobiles for sexual encounters, and diffusion of birth control technology all weaken sexual prohibitions. That this liberalization cannot be judged unalloyed progress is due to the impact of social authority on the erotic experience. Yet the dangers of falling into a cranky conservatism must be faced. If the banners for a sexual revolution are sagging, the bumper stickers for family revival are worse. It cannot be maintained that the liberalization of sexual codes yields cheap thrills while deep satisfying relations accompanied traditional prohibition.

Marcuse's concept of "repressive desublimation" sought to do justice to the antagonistic reality of sexual liberalization: a simultaneous release of sexual energies — desublimation — and a contraction of its mode. Sexuality was integrated into late capitalism. That sexuality is used to sell every possible commodity hardly captures the reality. Sexuality more than adorns the commodity; the commodity adorns denatured sexuality. Sexuality is explicit and encouraged, and loses its explosive and individual dimension. It can no longer be separated from cigarettes, beer, and shampoo. Capitalism seduces the sexuality it shackles with the sweet talk of a life without chains.

Repressive desublimation may shed light on the narcissistic character. The psychoanalytic discussions of narcissism regularly refer to the damaged super-ego.

4. Otto Kernberg, *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism* (N.Y., 1975), p. 254.
5. Otto Fenichel, *Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis* (N.Y., 1945), pp. 468-4.
6. Heinz Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self* (N.Y., 1972), pp. 65 ff.

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While both fact and fantasy comprise the super-ego, the fact of distant, cold, and inconsistent parents takes a toll. The process of idealization of parental authority, required for the super-ego, is impaired. Kohut states: "The environment which used to be experienced as threateningly close is now experienced more and more as threateningly distant; where children were formerly *overly* stimulated by the emotional life (including the erotic) of their parents, they are now often *under* stimulated."[7] Deprived of parents to idealize, the child, according to Kohut, grows up with a damaged super-ego.

If Kohut is right, the small hot house of the family, an incubator for neuroses, is traded in for air-conditioned condos, homes of narcissistic individuals. Kernberg states that a "composite picture" of the narcissistic patient shows "consistently a parent figure, usually the mother or mother surrogate, who functions well on the surface... but with a degree of callousness, indifference, and non-verbalized spiteful aggression."

Yet many questions that have dogged discussions of narcissism remain unresolved. Is there a decline of authority per se ("permissiveness") or a deflection of authority? Is the "classic" bourgeois family with a strong patriarch associated with resilient egos and critical intelligence? Can or should this family form be defended? Is the newer, fragmented family composed of passive and accepting individuals?

The Frankfurt School has often been accused of romanticizing and desiring to return to the classic bourgeois family, in essence their own. It is indubitable that calls to shore up the family smack of down-home religion and hatred for up-town living. The Left, and especially the utopian Left, has historically advocated the reconstruction, not restoration, of the family. Yet, this is a fact, not an argument. It would not be the first time that the Left critique has lagged behind the developments of capitalism; and that the blueprints for a socialist future were nothing but xeroxes of the capitalist past. The re-organization of the family as a program of the future may confuse the acceleration of the past with emancipation.

In any case, the critics of narcissism and dwindling parental authority, or at least the Frankfurt School, do not urge the restoration of past forms of authority. Their analysis distinguishes between authority and authoritarianism. This is no quibble. If this distinction is lost, the social-psychology of fascism and the social configuration of narcissism blur. Their *Autorität und die Familie* (1936) and *Authoritarian Personality* (1950) dissected authoritarianism in the family. The later work correlated personality traits with a predisposition towards fascism. These traits included a rigid conformity, an inability to tolerate ambiguity, a barely repressed hostility and aggression, and so on. The parents of authoritarian personalities tended to be rigid disciplinarians. They demanded of their children total and unquestioned obedience and submission.

Is this what the Frankfurt School wants to restore? Obviously not. Here there is no abdicated authority, but total, traumatic, unbending authority. Max Horkheimer himself cites a relatively unknown text of Marx's that illuminates the problem. Marx in 1846 wrote a short article called "Peuchet: On Suicide," essentially a long extract from the memoirs of Jacques Peuchet, keeper of the archives of the Parisian police. Peuchet recorded, in loving detail, the tale of a young couple from the "lower mercantile classes," honest, decent, hardworking people, who were engaged to be

7. Heinz Kohut, *The Restoration of the Self* (N.Y., 1972), p. 271.
8. O. Kernberg, *Borderline Conditions,* p. 235.
9. Else Frenkel-Brunswick, "Intolerance of Ambiguity as an emotional and perceptual Personality Variable," in her *Selected Papers, Psychological Issues,* Monograph 31 (N.Y., 1974), pp. 67 ff. Frenkel-Brunswick was a collaborator of the *Authoritarian Personality.*

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married. After all arrangements for the marriage were completed, a dinner celebration was held at the family of the bridegroom. The bride stayed the night. When their daughter returned the next morning, her parents heaped abuse on her. Their fury knew no bounds; neighbors joined in attacking the daughter. Utterly humiliated, she fled and threw herself into the Seine. Marx commented: "The most cowardly, unresisting people become implacable as soon as they *can exercise their absolute parental authority. The abuse of this authority* is, as it were, a *crude compensation* for all the submissiveness and dependence to which they abuse themselves willy-nilly in bourgeois society."[10]

Authority here is the power of the powerless; those who submit daily to the larger society take their revenge on their children. In home and hearth they are dictators, brooking no dissent. They do to the weak what has been done to them.

This vignette, and Marx's comments, tally with the description and analyses of the authoritarian personality. Brutal parental authority consoles the brutalized. No regret for the passing of this family of authority (if it in fact has passed) flutters through the Frankfurt School or the critique of narcissism. The obverse is true. The Frankfurt School has indicted family authoritarianism as the crucible of fascist and authoritarian character structure. The ego of the child crushed by unyielding and vengeful authority gravitates towards political authoritarianism.[11] Total hatred for authority is transmuted by pain into total identification. If narcissism is the successor to the authoritarian personality, society has advanced.

Yet narcissism may not be the successor to authoritarianism but to another social-psychological form. Class may be the missing and elusive ingredient. What lurks behind the critique of narcissism is the authority of the "classic" bourgeois family; this family and the authoritarian family diverge in their social composition. It does not seem fortuitous that Marx's example is drawn from the "lower mercantile classes;" and that the authoritarian personality, and the sources of fascism, are associated with marginal or threatened social groupings (which, however, are in no way numerically insignificant).[12]

The bourgeois family in its "classic" phase was not marginal or threatened, but secure and independent. Not its numerical frequency, but unique configuration of authority and affection is the issue. Authority was severe, but not brutal or inconsistent. Total submission was not the goal; nor was the family lacking in warmth.[13] This is not to say there were no victims; there were, especially women. These victims furnished the patients for psychoanalysis.

The bourgeois family, it seems likely, developed into the narcissistic family; the class composition remains roughly the same. The case reports of narcissistic patients allow fleeting views of family life; these do not show parents who, after long, grueling days of waiting on tables or driving cabs, come home to bark at their too many children; but parents who are relatively successful, whose energies are directed towards themselves and their careers; and who tend to be enlightened but also cold

10. Karl Marx, "Peuchet: On Suicide," (1846), in Marx & Engels *Collected Works,* vol. IV (N.Y. and Moscow, 1975), p. 605.

11. T.W. Adorno, et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* (N.Y., 1950 and 1969), pp. 372 ff.

12. The social and class base of Fascism can obviously not be discussed in a sentence or two; it has provoked a large debate. See Reinhard Kühnl, *Formen bürgerlicher Herrschaft. Liberalismus-Faschismus* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1971); Tomas Childers, "The Social Bases of the National Socialist Votes," in *Journal of Contemporary History,* XI-4 (October, 1976), pp. 17-42; and Anson G. Rabinbach, "Towards a Marxist Theory of Fascism and National Socialism," in *New German Critique*, no. 3 (Fall, 1974), pp. 127-153

13. Cf. Mark Poster, *Critical Theory of the Family* (N.Y., 1978), pp. 166 ff., and generally Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (N.Y., 1977).

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to the few children at home.

That narcissism may be circumscribed by class does not, of course, dispose of it. The bourgeoisie makes society in its own image. The impact of narcissism in society may be measured by the attitude towards children. A new ethic is taking shape, and this ethic exposes the commodity structure of narcissism. More and more couples decide against, or perpetually delay, having children. This decision marks a departure from the ideal (and imperative) of a family with children.

Childless couples are not most visible among those working the hardest for the least wages. Here, a case could be made for the rationality of no children; they drain scarce psychic and economic resources. Rather, childlessness has surfaced among young, relatively wealthy professionals. These individuals, it might seem, are richest in the psychic and economic resources to bestow on children. Yet the reverse seems true; they are unable or unwilling to afford the psychic energy, affection and attention that children require.

If these sociological impressions are accurate, the terrain where psychological narcissism speaks the language of the commodity can be charted. The most advanced social groups — affluent young professionals — expose most sharply the advanced tendencies of capitalism. Narcissism is conventionally designated as hedonistic, the pursuit of self-gratification. The description misses its inner structure: the hedonism of narcissism is parsimonious. It does not squander its energies in the mad pursuit of pleasure but doles it out while scanning interest rates and stock reports.

Hedonism is not an invariant beyond and outside society, but bares the imprint of history and class.[14] Not the dissolute hedonism of the surplus aristocracy but resolute hedonism marks the ambitious professionals; hedonism becomes calculated and calculating, healthy and approved, as well as profitable. As the psychic household of the individual is remodeled into a financial counseling service, children receive a poor rating; they are high risks, requiring too much initial investment and too few guaranteed returns. The exchange principle, capitalism's own weapon, is used by the bourgeoisie to prune its own family. Hedonism devours itself.

The bourgeoisie organized society around an already primordian principal — that of exchange. An eye for an eye was renovated into equal exchange of value. As Marx knew, the principle of exchange value revolutionized the world, and within a class society, razed distinctions of birth, talent, blood, and tradition. Money was the universal language, and regardless of other virtues, those who manage to obtain it wield power.

Within an exchange economy, the family sticks out as an irrational blot. Based on blood, and love and hate, it crassly violates the rationalizing drive of exchange value. Its relationships are not simply reciprocal. The relationships of parents to each other, to their parents, to their children, and so on are not two-way streets. Love and attention are not returned in equal measures. Love relations are compounded and complicated not simply by antagonisms and hatreds but by excesses which cannot be parcelled out in neat packages. An infant cannot return the love and attention bestowed on it.

The exact development of the family remains disputed; yet it can be argued that the family has ineluctably surrendered to the law of exchange. Exchange value has not simply knocked at the door but migrated into bedroom, nursery, and sickroom. This means that the family casts off unequal relationships. All relations are appraised with an eye on the psychic bank account; spending must balance

14. See Herbert Marcuse, "On Hedonism," in *Negations* (Boston, 1968).

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earnings. Consequently the family contracts, eliminating the old and other kin. Requiring more care and attention than they can return, they are herded off to the state agencies and institutions. Psychic bankruptcy is avoided by retrenching, cutting off losing investments: the old, children, the sick, and so on.

Neither narcissism or the family can be considered apart from the tendencies of capitalism. Both express in different terms the subordination to the exchange principle. Both accept the same currency. Children are deemed an increasingly unwise investment. For the professional, children are judged a drain and obstacle to career and pleasures. Pets, autos, jogging, tennis lessons, offer more reliable compensation for the same expenditure. The "fatherless" and "kinless" society devolves into the "childless" society. Alvin Toffler, the professional seer, anticipates that children will play an insignificant role in the future society. Love relations which cannot be commodified are treated as if they were the threats they actually are.

The loosening of the ties between parents and children bespeaks a fundamental shift in emotional life. Once an ethic of sacrifice bound parents to children. For many groups in America this ethic constituted a religion: work, sacrifice and self-denial for the sake of the children. It also testified to a belief in a better future. Sacrifice glued together parents and children, and parents and parents, and parents and their parents.

It is no secret that sacrifice has fallen on dog days. At best it is obsolete, honored but hardly practiced (and well captured in Mary Gordon's *Final Payments*). Sacrifice, not simply in regard to children, but in regard to all people and commitments, erodes away. Like the family, sacrifice is invaded by exchange value. By definition, sacrifice is a one-way, not a two-way, relationship. More is given, bestowed, or invested than received. To the narcissistic, sacrifice is a con job, a loss with no benefits. Self-effacement, in the name of sacrifice, is a burden that the self threatened with effacement can no longer endure.

The corrosion of sacrifice did not originate in the deep recesses of the psyche, but in the excesses of the economy. For decades capitalism has been shoring itself up by intensifying consumption. The imperative to buy and enjoy displaced the religion of save and sacrifice. A deliberate attack on the "puritanism in consumption" dates at least from the 1920s.[15] Advanced capitalism requires a programmed hedonism as much as earlier capitalism needed Calvinism and sacrifice.

To ease overproduction and underconsumption, capitalism extended credit towards itself and its consumers. If the public and private debt bails out the economy, it also yields inflation, the unassailable argument against saving and sacrifice. To bank on the future is to risk bankruptcy. Through every pore the message is drilled in to spend and enjoy in the here and now.

Talk of the erosion of sacrifice like the critique of narcissism seems to regret the passing of an era, to long for the return of honest sacrifice. Let there be no doubt; the non-rational moment of sacrifice has oiled all irrational movements and institutions. Its kinship with domination cannot be mistaken. That the big as well as the petty despots, the preachers and presidents, dictators and kaisers, kings and generals have all celebrated sacrifice and defamed hedonism is hardly an accident. Citizens and subjects were berated, and often compelled, to sacrifice their happiness, and sometimes their lives, to keep the larger institutions wheezing along. Dressed up as patriotism and duty, sacrifice coerced the weak to surrender quietly.

15. Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness* (New York, 1976), p. 57.

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For this reason, the corrosion of sacrifice — parents to children, wife to husband, citizens to state — is hardly pure regression. Narcissism harbors a protest in the name of individual health and happiness against irrational sacrifice. Where the dead weight of sacrifice crushes, this cannot be minimized. Nor should it be uncritically celebrated. Narcissism is historically specific, dissimilar in southern Italy and the upper East Side of New York City.[16] The protest of narcissism within advanced capitalism is shot through with the society it rejects; it affirms and buttresses the commodity market. Its mode of protest is private, its substance the exchange principle of capitalism. If sacrifice recalls pre-capitalist life, narcissism beckons a step closer the stock market of human relations.

16. See for instance Anne Parsons, "Paternal and Maternal Authority in the Neapolitan Family," in her *Belief, Magic and Anomie* (N.Y., 1969).

ON NARCISSISM

by Stanley Aronowitz

Ever since the discovery of the individual, Western intellectuals have been perturbed by a set of binaries: the individual and society, private and public, self and other. The distinction between inner and outer already signifies the roots of estrangement, the reconciliatin of which becomes a utopian hope to which civilization periodically dedicates itself, but increasingly regards as unreachable. It was the realization that the individual and society were epistemologically opposed that, at first, gave rise to the imputed division of social life into the public and private. In this reprise, the public sphere was interpreted in two ways: political theory understood the public life as the site of discourse among equals concerning matters of mutual concern. The revelation that this discourse was, however, mediated by private interests gave rise to theories of the state as the mediation among economically motivated individuals who could not achieve equality, despite the contractually based commodity relations that undergirded their interaction.

Thus, the obliteration between self and other could only be realized in the family, now regarded, in contrast to the market and the state, as the "private sphere." As early as *Hegel's Philosophy of Right,*[1] critical philosophy discovered the sociological root of its dissolution: the death of parents and the education of the young on one hand, and the basis of the marriage in the transfer of property (Marx and Engels pointed out that women were property transferred in marriage). Thus, Hegel noticed that the family and civil society were not bifurcated as it first appears. Love relations were bound to relations of domination since they were based upon the exchange of capital and women.

It remained for Marx to remove the last illusion from bourgeois critical philosophy's hope for a private sphere by arguing that the state was an instrument of

1. See especially the section on the family. Hegel's argument for the state rests on his attempt to show the partial and incomplete character of family and civil society and the need for concrete transcendence.

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capital, contrary to constituting the form of social and ethical unity for the conflicting elements of family and civil society, the state was a quintessential repressive apparatus. Individuals could not realize themselves in the state; on the contrary they were constituted in part as objects of its domination.

Critical theory had one last refuge — to posit the self, the individual, and the private realm prior to any possible social relations. To Marx's famous dictum that the individual was nothing but the ensemble of social relations constituted by family, state, and civil society, late 19th century liberal theory argued either from Protestant inspiration, psychoanalysis, or Kantian philosophy that the subject required no presuppositions. The private sphere was the home of the individual homeless in the world. For some, the family, albeit constituted by property relations and, more transhistorically, by patriarchy, was nevertheless a "haven." Whether posited as a presupposition of social relations (Christopher Lasch),[2] or the functional space assigned for healing the wounds inflicted by civil society (Max Horkheimer),[3] some writers argued that to subsume the individual and the family under the categories of social reproduction or ideology was to lapse into a type of historical relativism that was ultimately indefensible.

Freud and his followers argued from different premises. The heart of the project for a "scientific" psychology insisted that the self was not internally identical. It was a ruptured unity in which a fundamental conflict prevailed: the struggle between the pleasure principle and the reality principle, the id and the superego, sexuality and labor (repression of sexuality by repression). The psyche's relation to the external world was antagonistic but inevitably a struggle won, in the last analysis, by the reality principle (connected in his last theoretical work to the death instinct), the superego and labor. The social order maintains itself, according to the later Freud, no longer by repression of sexuality from above; now, survival was accorded the status of an instinct. Thus, the unconscious itself was divided between the id and survival (death).[4]

The individual self was obliged to exchange the id for the ego as the price of survival. For Freud, society constitutes the historical individual but only according to prefigured structures of the ruptured psyche. At the bottom there is the unreconstructable erotic instincts which are oblivious to the rules of social and physical reproduction, seeking only to satisfy insatiable desire.

In the final instance, Freud found that desire was not produced socially and became the subversive force that tears society apart. His theory of the death instinct and the "discovery" that human destructiveness was rooted in biologically unsocialized drives, were developed in the context of the first world war which, for Freud, was evidence enough that without the rule of law and the insistence upon repression against unbridled pleasure, civilization would yield to "barbarism."[5] Thus the sin of self-love could not be tolerated, and Narcissus, that mythological figure representing eros, must be made harmless.

Marcuse's luminous misreading of Freud purports to be a philosophical inquiry whose relation to the clinical work is extrinsic.[6] Nevertheless, in the chapter

2. Christopher Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World* (New York, 1977).
3. Max Horkheimer, "Authority and the Family," *Critical Theory* (New York, 1972), pp. 47-128.
4. See Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (New York, 1961); *Ego and the Id* (London, 1927); and "A Note on the Unconscious," in *Papers on Metapsychology,* Philip Reiff, editor (New York, 1965).
5. See Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents, op.cit.*
6. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (Boston, 1955).

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"Orpheus and Narcissus," Marcuse proposed to reconstruct the mythological meaning of self-love, to recall that Narcissus withdraws not from reality, but from the *reality principle* which demands the subordination of sexuality to procreation, a definition of eros that finds its apogee in work, and in the business of social reproduction. For Marcuse, Narcissus is humankind's desire to create a different eros — one in which the self is no longer merely the historically situated ensemble of social relations, but has come into its own. Narcissus is the refusal to look outward to repressive society, and contrary to the pathological conception advanced by Freud, it signals the surfacing of desire as a social force. For Marcuse, Narcissus and Orpheus are "symbols of a non-repressive erotic attitude toward reality," reconciliations with nature that are not based upon the subordination of sexuality but connected to "oneness with the universe," and a new kind of "relatedness to reality which may generate a comprehensive existential order."[7]

Thus, in rejecting the distinction between private and public which has formed the foundation of traditional theory's attempt to provide an ontological ground for the individual, Marcuse is equally opposed to a conception of the individual in historicist terms. Without resorting to a reductionist biological determinism, Marcuse argues for a historically mediated *desire* which is situated outside the social order and thus can only be integrated, channeled or repressed temporarily by it. Narcissus is an aspect of the utopian moment lodged in the imagination when social relations have achieved domination over sexuality either by means of the imposition of a compulsory sexual morality that refuses the pleasure principle or by a repressive desublimation that permissively renders sex harmless by reducing fucking to a purely physical act. Yet, Marcuse's argument continues to hinge on the traditional perspective that the liberation of individuality is the condition and object of social and political freedom.

Freud's polemic against the sin of narcissism is framed in the discourse of science. Yet, despite the clinical language, he cannot avoid moral pejoratives.[8] It is the linkage to schizophrenia that seals the negative judgement of the narcissist. Although such a person may be considered "ill" and therefore subject to treatment, the conflation of the withdrawal of libidinal cathexis from external objects with the concept of the narcissism is not merely a convenient use of the mythological image for the purposes of scientific classification. It is connected to Freud's *intention* to treat all forms of autosexuality, including homosexuality, as manifestations of an arrested sexual development. The aim to "normal" sexuality is a love object with whom procreation and the inscribing of children into the social order is the final object.

Wilhelm Reich understood Freud's turn in his last twenty years (a period corresponding to the interwar period) as a betrayal of his earlier naming of repressed sexuality in all its phases as the underlying dynamic of emotional pathologies.[9]

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7. *Ibid.*, pp. 153-154.

8. See, for example, Freud, "A Note on the Unconscious," *op.cit.;* and Philip Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of a Moralist* (New York, 1959).

9. See especially Wilhelm Reich, *The Function of Orgasm* (New York, 1973), chapter 6. Reich's account of how Freud turned his theory of instinct from a critique of society into an ontological argument for the inevitability of repression is indispensable for understanding both Reich's direction in the 1930s, which he ascribed to fealty to Freud's original *project* of a critical psychology, and the departures of Herbert Marcuse and Deleuze and Guattari. What these diverse writers share, against Freud's later counsel, is the belief that sexuality (called erotic by Marcuse, desire by Deleuze and the French school) is not fully constituted by the social order and that humans cannot introject domination, that is, repress and displace their needs without dire consequences for both individuals and society.

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According to the later Freud, if social reproduction were to be assured, the aim of psychoanalysis could never be to free the individual of guilt. The "discovery" of the death instinct in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* was merely Freud's declaration that he had abandoned the criticism of compulsory sexual morality. Now pessimism was to be ascribed to the inevitable defeat of life-eros-sexuality by death. Individuals constrained to accept sexual repression as the price that the present must pay to the future, and duty replaces pleasure in the quest for the conquest of external nature, even if our inner nature is beyond control.

Despite Marcuse's denunciation of Reich for his later "biological" theories of sexuality, they agreed on one major point: the costs of sexual repression were too great for humankind to bear. Notwithstanding that contemporary consumer capitalism permits pleasure without the reconciliation with nature, such spurious gratification has nothing in common with the political and social program of sexual liberation. For sexual liberation is not grounded in the renunciation of desire nor in the reconstitution of institutions of social reproduction such as the family. For Marcuse liberation was already present in myth as much as art. Its basis was in the oceanic feeling, the putative oneness of humans and nature represented in the absence of clear boundaries between the infant and its mother — the pre-individual moment when the child cannot distinguish itself from its origins, when time is suspended because self and other has not yet been bifurcated. Thus, Marcuse's concept of beauty is quintessentially *impractical*; it opposes the reproductive and functional aspects of modern society that force the child to recognize the permanence of its loss, which for Freud signals the presence of death instinct at the earliest stages. The figure of Orpheus and Narcissus become, for Marcuse, the concentrations of those elements in myth that show the transhistorical character of erotic subversion, its indomitability. Social theory after Reich and Marcuse has responded to the veritable cultural revolution of our times with a mixture of horror and fascination. "Progressive" and conservative critics of contemporary morals have similarly bemoaned the loss of family-centered authority and have explained much of their perception of impending social chaos by the loss of moral standards among the young. Like Freud, they have grasped the truth of the family as the key institution of social reproduction and the internalization of the canon of monogamous heterosexual morality as necessary for the creation of the socially responsible individual. Critics such as Lasch who would cringe at any hint that they have become conservative critics, share the historical judgement that the family is not only dead or dying, but argue for its reconstruction as emotionally and politically necessary if liberal society is to survive.

The characterization of the family as a "haven" in a world dominated by atomization and a cruelly selfish individualism is, of course, a rather conventional insight, even among Marxists. Just as religion becomes necessary in a world in which people find themselves adrift, so the family repairs the wounds suffered in the wake of the defeat of great social movements. For, as Horkheimer observed, humans have but a limited capacity to tolerate "permanent" social transformation. They become weary of a constant struggle that appears to bring few results. The family, whether desireable or not, he argues, provides some elements of that community that people sought but failed to achieve within the public realm. At the same time, as the cornerstone of patriarchy as well as capitalism the "haven" once again assures that the life world recovers its rhythms, that capital may once again accumulate based on the restoration of labor discipline, that daily life assumes a pyramidal configuration, that a new generation is born that may introject domination through sexual repression.

The assumption that the family has disappeared as a controlling force over indivi-

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duals has become a virtual slogan among those who would reconstitute it. The assertion of its nadir must surely be one of the central examples of ideology production among intellectuals. Of course, the family is alive and well, even if it has been forced to shift its forms. In black and working class communities, its breakdown has been consistently overstated by those like Patrick Moynihan and Nathan Glazer who would ascribe economic inequality to imperfect socialization of children arising from the seriality of social life within ghetto neighborhoods.[10] But the ideology of family fragmentation and breakdown is most alarming to critics of mass society who argue for a return to a 19th century world of close knit nuclear or extended families where children are taught to live their lives as productive citizens. It does not matter that this romantic vision of the past may not have corresponded to any particular family or social group. What counts is its invocation to those whose militant rejection of parental authority in the 1960s was held responsible for the emergence of the New Left, not only its particular organizations, but its broad cultural influence among white youth of the middle strata.

Certainly, bourgeois society cannot reproduce itself without transforming its middle classes into cadre as much as producing a working class in each generation willing to take its role as producers seriously. According to the social logic of new-conservatives of all varieties, the task of inscribing kids into the social order cannot be assured without the broad imposition of a "compulsive" sexual morality. And there can be no doubt that the chief mechanism for instituting bourgeois morality is *guilt*. If it is acknowledged that the dark recesses of the human soul are relatively oblivious to social norms, society seeks to win over its young by means of a strong superego whos · social manifestation is the authoritarian father and a kindly mother. The function of the father is fairly plain. Through the fear of punishment, particularly that of castration, he secures the obedience of the boy child. The girl child is promised the love of the father at the price of emulating the mother. For both genders, the mother holds out the spurious hope for a return to the ultimate commune, the womb. but supplication requires voluntary renunciation of polymorphous perversity and other sexual proclivities that may disrupt the cycle of social and biological reproduction. The mother threatens to withdraw love if the child is bad. Freud holds that it is her loss to the child that constitutes the child as an individual, but also produces the agony of isolated self.[11] The child must learn to repress sexuality by seeking ego gratification in work, beginning, in modern times, in school achievements.

Narcissism and the withdrawal of the psyche from persons and things is a way to achieve another eros and, according to Marcuse, opposes the concentration and displacement of the erotic in families that exchange the license to fuck for the agreement to participate in commodity and labor markets. The narcissistic individual insists that ego gratification through labor and conventional moral structures is an unnecessary repression of sexuality. Having discovered that the system of reward and punishment offered by society is a fraud, the person turns inward, seeking a different kind of reconciliation with the external world that is essentially unproductive. Desire has gone amok, it has refused containment to certain hours of the day, days of the week, times of the year. It is disruptive of the processes of inscription of the social order upon the individual.

Of course, desire is, for the most part, contained by the imagination, by art, by

10. See Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Nathan Glazer, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (Cambridge, 1970).

11. See Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (New York, 1950).

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fashion, and by language, and remains at the margins of culture. It is a subversion that is displaced to the harmless, but it has become a spectre haunting productivist societies whose struggle to preserve themselves is never ending. The paranoid assertion that narcissism has become rampant in Western, particularly American, culture is not entirely false. We wish to hold onto our youth, if by this we mean the moment when play, the sexual, the "bad" was the underworld that we inhabited under the fearful and watchful eyes of adults. We *were* nature in those days, the uncontrollable wild horde that "gave our parents heart failure" as we streaked between cars, masturbated under stairs and in the bathrooms, or conspired against teachers.

Paul Willis has shown that the process by which working class kids learn working class jobs is not achieved by means of converting the young into productivist citizens.[12] Contrary to radical, middle class critics of education who project their own experiences of becoming dutiful sons and daughters of the system during elementary and secondary school years, most workers (white, hispanic, and black) are formed in the course of rejecting authority. Workers learned how to fail in school in middle class terms, but succeeded in learning how to survive in the shop, how to hide a part of production when they had a good day, how to protect each other from punishments imposed by authorities, how to refuse work, and how to sabotage. This rebellion occluded the possibility of entering the professions, business, management. Those like myself, who managed to play both sides of the street, never forgot that it was better, despite the "no money" economy, than the constant warfare with elders. We were guerrillas of desire, fighting for our autonomy against the entire apparatus of domination. And it *was* sexual repression that constituted the most sharply contested terrain. For the most part, they won, and we got married — young.

Yet the moment of refusal, the moment of desire, must find its displaced turf. During the sixties, a brief historical moment, the rebellion of the middle class kids became overt. I do not mean to deny the specifically political character of the dissent. Surely to reduce the anti-war and civil rights movments to their psycho-sexual determinants would be excessive. Yet neither could the crisis of that period be encapsulated by arguments over imperialist intervention or social and economic equality. What remains to be explained is why the Vietnam war and not the Korean war, or why the sexually repressive slogans of anti-communism, failed to contain the skepticism about politics and morals later and not earlier. If we listen to those who made the movements of that period we hear articulations about the boredom of suburban life, the refusal to submit to imposed occupational and moral choices. We hear stories of how consumption as an end was found wanting, of how the surplus repressiveness of post-scarcity sub-cultures became intolerable. The demonstrations were not orderly. They assumed the character of the wild horde that terrified *our* parents, and still produces the litany of managerial complaints about declining productivity. The horrific aspect of the 1960s uprisings was that the system's cadre were its subjects. A portion of the new radicalism asked the question about the moral economy of late capitalism, a challenge infinitely more dangerous than a substantial wage increase for auto workers or the Equal Rights Amendment.

This radicalism opened wounds that have been buried in the vitals of civilized order since its inception that produced the conservative reaction of the 1970s. The attack on narcissism is the protest of those intellectuals who have been integrated into late capitalism as producers of its ideology and guardians of its moral norms. Today, as sexual politics once again occupies a place in the crevices of social life, we

12. Paul Willis, *Learning to Labour* (Lexington, Kentucky, 1979).

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are treated with a belated cry of revenge. For despite the waning of the political movements that were the repositories of the psychosexual uprisings of the sixties and the considerable evidence that cultural consumerism (especially middle-brow museum and concert going) has occupied some of the spaces won by a generation that wished to liberate itself from repressive culture, the counter-attack continues because there are still traces of the revolt. Further, everyday life has remained problematic for women, constituting a rupture in the apparatus of social reproduction.

Here are the guilty professors, the new moral guardians of a Victorian morality that once more receives a breath, enunciating their rage against narcissism and producing a new cannon of counterrevolution. Bell transcodes his old theme of the "end of ideology" as "cultural contradiction" to the dream of liberal capitalism that wishes to reduce all contradiction to problems of management. Wilson, desperately trying to account for the refusal of desire to be buried, incorporated, displaced, or counted as the artificial negativity of the system, decides that human aggression is rooted in the biological structures of *homo sapiens*. Lasch, "radical" critic, rails against narcissism.[13] Yet, each of them relies on that category that glues us to the social order — guilt. For it is guilt that makes the world go round, that reminds us from within of our obligation to reproduce the social order even as we reject these inscriptions that are handed down from above and without. We are permitted our sexual indiscretions as long as we feel bad about them afterward. We can take a day off from work, fail to show up at a relative's funeral, but we must have regrets. We become little Hans, Freud's famous patient, at the moment when the will to subvert is most powerful.[14] Recall how little Hans was taught to regard his masturbatory abstention as a triumph of self-control, and how, in order to win approval of his parents, his attempts to transgress the prescribed territories to which he was assigned met with disapproval. For, although early childhood is marked by the anxiety of forbidden sexuality, Deleuze and Guattari have argued cogently that sex is connected to autonomy.[15] The aim of guilt is to proscribe our autonomy. The charge that individuals are wallowing in a culture of narcissism where they have hedonistically taken themselves as love object is a means not of changing behavior but its solidifying under the yoke of guilt.

The question raised by the new social criticism that seeks to restore an appresication of the ideologies and institutions of Western bourgeois culture is whether and to what extent intellectuals have retained their autonomy and critical reflexivity. The tradition of anti-communist, left intellectuals, who reacted in the 1960s to the new radicals as nihilistic, millenarian and, ultimately, dangerous to the preservation of individual liberty and social responsibility, is closely connected to the belief that to give up the old culture is tantamount to opening the doors to barbarism (in the sense the left uses the term). But one must make a distinction between an attempt to transcend the old culture on the basis of redeeming those aspects of it that remain supressed in technologically dominated late capitalist societies, and the command to return to sexual and social repression as the best guarantee of social order. During the 1960s and early 1970s the most vehement critique of the new

13. See, respectively, Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York, 1976); Edward Wilson, *Sociobiology* (Cambridge, 1975); and Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York, 1978).

14. See Sigmund Freud, "Analysis of Phobia in a Five Year Old Boy," in *Standart Edition*, vol. 10 (London, 1955).

15. Gilles Deluze and Felix Guattari, "Little Hans," *Language, Sexuality and Subversion*, Paul Foss and Meaghan Morris, editors (Darlington, Australia, 1978).

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radicalism did not arise from the right wing new-conservatives who were in any case muffled by the brief revival of social liberalism that accompanied the civil rights and anti-war movements. The leading critics were the right *progressives* — carry-overs from the era of the Moscow trials, the abhorrent popular fronts of the depression and war years, and the cold war. These were socialists who argued, sometimes with justice, that modernism was more emancipatory than the most romantic proletarian novel, that the bourgeois university was worth preserving in spite of the fashionable New Left slogan "smash the university," and argued for repressive tolerance against Marcuse's notion that in a time of technocratic hegemony the doctrine of fairness was merely another moment of oppression.[16]

This is not the place to review that particular set of historical debates. It may be that the contempt of the young for their intellectual mentors (e.g., Lionel Trilling and Daniel Bell) was much deeper than the political opposition generated against open spokespersons for American imperialism such as Henry Kissinger. Yet the students suspected that the critique of their praxis emanating from the right progressives would not stop with issues of civil liberties or the defense of the old literary canon. The ex-socialist liberal intellectuals had concatenated sexual emancipation with what they often referred to as the New Left authoritarianism. For Hannah Arendt and other refugees from fascism, the New Left was simultaneously attractive and fear-producing. They could not help hoping that the youth in the streets would bring a new era of freedom and individuality. However, the cultural revolution was too confusing in the wake of Walter Benjamin's warning against the aestheticization of everyday life. The attempt to make of politics a festival was too close to the fascist program of strength through joy.[17] Of course, there was a grain of truth in both the charges that many leftists had become authoritarian in their puritanical devotion to liberation and that some elements of the New Left felt no obligation towards civil liberties, choosing instead to disrupt the meetings of their political opponents. Yet these tendencies never dominated the movement and the concern of the right progressive intellectuals always appeared slightly paranoid.

What is equally alarming about the recent outburst of anti-narcissism is its implication for the development of movements of workers, women, and racial and national minorities. A chief characteristic of the subaltern classes of capitalist society consists precisely in their deep respect for authority, their otherness, their tendency to become spectators in a drama in which they are the objects and rarely the actors. Lasch criticizes the passive consumption of spectacles, but he links the spectacle with wanton, imbibing pleasure, rather than understanding that the movie goer or the fan are neither created completely by the mass media nor are they merely signs of passivity. The excitement and glamour associated with celebrity, the *act* of watching a movie or a ball game are substitutes for the absence of a genuinely public life. However, even if such a public sphere existed, the historical evidence suggests that it

16. The historical progenitor of the current crop of right progressives grouped around the *New York Review, Public Interest,* and *Commentary* was *Partisan Review* (now reduced in influence). While the Communist left viewed the intellectuals grouped around *Partisan Review* (Rahv, Phillips, Trilling, Greenberg, Barrett) with unmitigated contempt for their criticism of the political and literary canons of Stalinism, the Left as a whole failed to come to terms with the ways in which the defense of bourgeois culture was made politically cogent by mass culture, the depoliticization of the working class, and the technicization of reason. Needless to say, if these tendencies were only incipient before the Second World War, the past thirty-five years have witnessed the emergence of their hegemony over all culture.

17. These sentiments were expressed by Professor Hannah Arendt in classes I attended at The New School in 1969 as well as subsequent discussions in 1974 with the author.

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would be a bourgeois sphere unless those who have been excluded from making political decisions were able to recover their self, to find the basis upon which to validate their own pleasure as well as their own work. To see narcissism in Marcuse's sense is to understand that the clinical, technical context in which Freud placed the question has an application limited to individuals whose withdrawal from the external world is a retreat into an alternate world. But to subsume narcissism under cultural norms is a call for responsibility, for a kind of alienated involvement in which the self is denied. The steps towards the empowerment of those who displace their public life to the ballfield or the movie theater entail a partial withdrawal from the *imposed obligations* contained in the work-family world. This does not mean people can quit their jobs or their families (although, given the current depoliticized context in which we live, these are the only routes away short of psychic flight). To intervene politically on the basis of a reflexive recognition of common needs that are systematically denied in the culture is a means of recovering a collective narcissism as a moment in the process.

This path is particularly important for women whose obligations in the service of the reproduction of capital and patriarchy is becoming an object of rejection. Unless one may, with impunity, reject the aims of those movements seeking the emancipation of women from social, economic and psychic inequality, it is imperative to recognize the significance of the act of withdrawal, the alternative provided by *self-love* to the sacrifices demanded by society. But that is precisely what right progressive intellectuals propose as they identify narcissism with the decline of the West, as one of the core social pathologies that must be overcome if humanistic values are to be saved. The call for the revival of the family, for a return of the concept of service and responsibility to the center of our culture is tantamount to a call for the re-inscribing of women into the social order. Just as biological determinism has been used to rationalize the current status of women, so they are asked to forego their autonomy in behalf of traditional values lest the apocalypse of social destruction becomes a reality.

Thus does guilt once more assert itself, standing between women and their own desire for autonomy, their freedom to remake the world in images that may have only mythological reality such as the famous doctrine of mother right. Can there be doubt that people empower themselves at first in the imagination, through the fantasy of controlling the world and remaking it in their own image? The threat that underclasses, women, and youth may refuse social responsibilities dictated by the old morality invokes a counter-rhetoric of the catastrophe, one that has become a major theme of contemporary mass culture. From the displaced proletarian of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* to the uncontrolled working class thugs of *Clockwork Orange* to the brutalized woman executive of *Network* whose career has destroyed her capacity for heterosexual love and human compassion, the forces of order have revealed their fear of nature in terms of their fear of the masses. The sublaterns of this society become identified with instinct, sexuality with violence.

The "irrational" refusal of workers to work and the appearance of the neurotic woman unable to find the ratio between her "biologic" needs and her social ambition are the themes of contemporary sexual politics to which new-conservative criticism is directed. Intellectuals neither ask for collective self-validation nor criticize the guilt-engendered respect for law and order that afflicts the masses as an emotional plague. The relation of intellectuals to ordinary people has become largely *inorganic* while their positions in the academy inure them from news that the old culture was never democratic, that it was grounded in hierarchy and, most of all, patriarchy.

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They now demand obedience, the return to an authority that has been weakened but never surpassed.

The intellectual, for whom the process of reflexivity of selfhood are tools of their trade as much as a typewriter or a pencil, become weary of personal examination and sigh at the self-indulgence that seems to be a byproduct of our therapeutic culture. But for others, for whom obtaining a voice is linked to the possibility for emancipation, for whom the language of emancipation would be an acquisition of incomparable value, desire is no literary convention, but a powerful discovery. It may be excessive to claim that the old order contains nothing that is worth having; certainly I am not a self-hating intellectual who would jettison my recordings of the *Well Tempered Clavichord* or burn my Proust. But just as it is possible to revel in the introspection, the unabashed self-involvement of the modernists for whom finding their beautiful soul was the protest against an external world in which they could no longer find themselves, so may those who can only see themselves in the glamour of an actress or an athlete finally turn towards their own fantasy of sexuality and power as a prelude to taking it.

MASS CULTURE, NARCISSISM AND THE MORAL ECONOMY OF WAR

by Stuart Ewen

Parable

In 1835, an event, fateful within the history of modern consciousness, occurred. In late August of that year, *The New York Sun,* one of the first mass, commercial media, published a series of articles on the astronomical discoveries of Sir John Herschel, made at his observatory at the Cape of Good Hope, Southern Africa.

The articles were concerned with Herschel's telescopic surveillance of the moon. The first in the series described the telescope in some technological detail. The machine was a hybrid of science and magic: its lense was "24 feet in diameter, and weighed nearly 15,000 pounds after it was polished; its estimated magnifying power was 42,000 times."

Herschel, the *Sun* reported, believed that his instrument would make him a seer amid the unfolding of technical discovery. It would allow him "to study even the entomology of the moon, in case she contained insects upon her surface."[1]

The installments that followed were a temptation in the religion we call "progress." The next in the series provided readers with a look at the lunar surface, and soon...at the shady vegetation that reportedly flourished there. Then, encircled by woods, nestled by a valley, the scientist "beheld continuous herds of brown quadrupeds, having all the external characteristics of the bison."[2]

The articles were the handiwork of Richard Adams Locke, a relation of John Locke, and a star reporter for the *Sun.* Needless to say, the articles were a hoax. The alleged source for the articles, the *Journal of Science* from Edinburgh, was — at the

1. Frank M. O'Brien, *The Story of The SUN: New York, 1833-1928* (New York, 1928), p. 43.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

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time — defunct. Herschel himself continued his works at the Cape of Good Hope, totally ignorant of the stories' appearance. He was a victim of one new development in modern communication: the mass circulation, commercial press. It would be decades before he could have been promptly informed by another: the sub-marine telegraph lines. As he sat there at the tip of Africa, the stories about him took on the character of *fact* in New York City. Despite the fictional roots of the articles, the most important thing about them was their *facticity*. People believed them. The burgeoning network of printed newspapers spread the word further. Even doubts that were expressed, were expressed cautiously. Academics sought out the printed accounts; in the spirit of inquiry. The crowd gathered.

By the time that the silken, copper-colored humanoids appeared, many eyes were watching. Unlike the busy, urban, industrializing people who were reading about them, these moon creatures glided on diaphanous membranes linking hand and foot: they were "winged creatures" who far from being "engaged in any work of industry or art...spent their happy hours in collecting various fruits in the woods, in eating, flying, bathing, and loitering about upon the summits of precipices."[3] At the far end of mechanical science — it might have been argued — there lay paradise. People toiled under the *truth* of it.

What was so believable about this world that stood beyond the edges of common sense? Clearly this is a question of historic significance. It speaks to the structures of perception and understanding that have germinated in the industrial epoch. Somewhere within the historical explanation is the confusion and incomprehensibility of modern existence: customary understandings are no longer adequate. Somewhere within the historical explanation, there also lies the rise of the mass media which have placed their version of sense and order upon existence. The ability to forge *reality* was an early capacity of print; a capacity built upon since then by subsequent devices for storing and disseminating information. As the *word*, as the *image* is reproduced, and again, and again, it becomes *fact*, known similarly by strangers. It is the life-blood of a mobile world system employing standardized meanings and requiring standardized understandings. Fact! It is seen, over and over again. Repeated by itself, repeated by others. Where it is stored, it becomes a history. Against the picaresque and irretrievable quality of daily life, lies the tangible evidence of the printed word, of the graven image, of the fact. Its presence is awesome, and the tale of Richard Adams Locke's "moon hoax" reveals this power as a discovery.

The mass media appear as basic to the modern, secular system of belief. While the printed Bible stood at the center of the Protestant revolt, its claims were primordial. The printed, widely circulated daily newspaper, on the other hand, was also a child of modernity. Its spectacle was the forerunner of all the media spectacles to come. Its audience was increasingly tossed in a mobile and expanding world; experience provided only a hazy tunnel of perception. Literacy stood ennobled as the tool of liberty, while the newspaper began depicting the world in broadside. Thomas Paine or Frederick Douglass may reveal the emancipatory promise of literacy; but the "moon hoax" reveals its awful power, during a time when today's commercial networks of images, messages and audiences were first taking hold.

The publishers of these papers, scions of early industrial capitalism, were aware of their mighty force. While the *Sun* was the brainchild and property of Benjamin Day, another pioneer news merchant, James Gorden Bennett (publisher of *The New York Herald*) waxed eloquent about the historic potential of the daily, "penny

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 50-53.

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press." The "moon hoax" and its impact inject a dose of menacing wisdom into Bennett's seeming puffery: "What is to prevent a daily newspaper from being made the greatest organ of social life? Books have had their day — the theatres have had their day — the temple of religion has had its day. A newspaper can be made to take the lead of all these in the great movements of human thought and human civilization. A newspaper can send more souls to Heaven, and save more from Hell, than all the churches and chapels in New York — besides making money at the same time."[4]

Benjamin Day of the *Sun* expressed similar goals for the penny press. Mobilizing and standardizing opinion stood at the heights of his journalistic aspirations. Speaking in terms of New York's "laboring classes and the mechanics," Day claimed that, "Already we can perceive a change in the mass of the people. They think, talk, and act in concert."[5]

If Herschel's miraculous instrument couldn't find insects on the surface of the moon, the nascent mass media could and did. With the "moon hoax" we see the inner life of "objectivity," the ability of a universal marketplace, and its structures of communication, to construct webs of meaning, a panorama of perception. The ubiquity of the image became the groundwork for a new and compelling *truth*.[6]

Every day we still experience the rumblings of this "moon hoax" syndrome. It has become normalcy. Consumable facts, words and images, are generalized and infinite. Media images permeate the fabric of perception; they are among the weighty facts of our lives. Every so often, particularly with the emergence of a new realm of mediation (like photography, radio, computer, etc.), and the entry of new elements into the vernacular of understanding, there is a major eruption of the syndrome. One hundred three years after the moon hoax had consecrated the believability of the commercial press, Orson Welles and the Mercury Theater of the Air did the same for radio: with their news motif rendition of H.G. Wells' "War of the Worlds." Within eighteen years of radio's inception as a commercial institution of mass listenership, it had penetrated the sensibility. This time, the general anxiety of the modern world rhythm took form in a Martian landing in New Jersey; also believed by many.[7]

So in tune are people to the ability of media to verify the fantastic, to assemble truth out of motive or fantasy, that the 1969 landing of men on the moon was viewed by many as a trick, performed in a television studio: skepticism underwritten by self-conscious gullibility.

In our histories of the media, the above survive: as anecdotes with a comical edge. Yet beyond being anecdotal, they are significant. Within an industrial regime — to a large extent — they map out the modern terms of knowledge and information. Imagination becomes domesticated as the raw material of the fact. The terrors and hopes of the imagination are channeled by the positivity of the fungible fact; structured by its reproducible certainty.

4. Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism, A History: 1690-1960* (New York, 1962), pp. 232-233.

5. O'Brien, *op.cit.*, p. 93.

6. An important contribution to our understanding of this question, will be Dan Schiller, *News Objectivity and the Rise of Commercial Journalism,* forthcoming (Philadelphia, 1981).

7. The "War of the Worlds" broadcast took place on the eve of Halloween, October 30, 1938. A good general sourcebook on the event is Howard Koch, *The Panic Broadcast* (New York, 1970). Koch was the author of the program's script. Another interesting study of this event is Hadley Cantril, *The Invasion From Mars: A Study in the Psychology of Panic* (Princeton, 1940).

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I

A cover story in the April 1980 issue of *Esquire* magazine announces a recent shift in the American sensibility. Coming away from the Vietnam war and from a decade or more of social activism — the magazine notes — America had lapsed into an era of poignant self-examination. "We paid attention to us," says the *Esquire* article. "Us. U.S. was us, and U.S. acknowledged it — 'You, you're the one.' " The scope of this sensibility was broad. Social, political, economic, spiritual and personal lives were permeated by the ethic of me-ism.

According to the *Esquire* piece, geo-political events have brought an end to all that. While moralistic condemnations of the "culture of narcissism" served to intensify the personal guilt associated with structured individualism and self-centeredness, *now*, at last, we have — seen through *Esquire* — been *"Saved!" "Saved!* by the man in the turban and *Saved!* by 80,000 Soviet troops but mostly *Saved!* by ...[the] discovery of the new ethic and language about to color our view of the nation. No longer did we hear about a government 'as good and honest, decent, truthful, and competent and compassionate and as filled with love as are the American people'.... Suddenly we heard about strength and power and superpower and cold war.... And not only was it cold, it was mean. Cold war meant toughness. It meant tension. It meant machination. It meant suspicion. It meant aggressiveness and competitiveness and firmness. It meant team play.... It meant business. It meant Hard Line. In short, enlisted men and women of the Western world, it meant — means — exactly the opposite of what you've been used to for the last few years."[8]

Insofar as "narcissism" became a central theme in the media broadsides and pop culture of the seventies, it is not unlikely that *Esquire's* estimation of the situation is correct. Spectacles of national sensibility, as well as tirades of moral outrage against them, seem to rise and fall like so many other campaigns emanating from national advertisers and image makers. In the annals of the spectacle, each moment has its brand name, its trademark. For those who have worried over the preponderant idiom of *self* which characterized the latter part of the seventies, take heart! Pretty soon, our hearts may belong to daddy, once again. It appears like that good old world of authority and discipline may be on the horizon.

Yet while the mass culture may tend to generate a nomenclature for every present, as it eradicates the past, the social phenomenon called "narcissism" is one of some concern. Not as the bevy of activities, commodities and slogans that celebrate "*my* needs," nor as a term of condemnation by which we judge others. Rather, narcissism as the structuring of needs and desires through selv-involved (mobile-individualistic) terms of gratification, is symptomatic of — has been symptomatic of — a general trend within an emerging *mass culture* itself. More specifically, the rise of a world market system; the development of a Protestant ideal of salvation and individual mobility; the development of industrial cities, factories, bureaucracies; the *enlightened* abandonment of community structure and ritual; and the universal penetration of a wage system of survival — all since the seventeenth century — have generalized the *self* as the highest form of popular existence. In personal and productive life, as Warren Susman has argued, "the rituals of the external church grew feebler," while the needs of the inner self grew stronger.[9] Bearing one's own

8. Peter W. Kaplan, "The End of the Soft Line," in *Esquire,* April 1980, pp. 41-47.

9. See Warren I. Susman, "'Personality' and the Making of Twentieth Century Culture," in John Higham and Paul Conkin, editors, *New Directions in American Intellectual History* (Baltimore, 1979).

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cross may be the signal of rugged individualism, but it is also that of neurotic normality. In Freud's view, the elimination of totemic structures did not do away with their function; it only personalized that function and loaded it upon our tattered and unit-ized souls.[10]

In evaluating the character of *mass culture*, the historic fragmentation of social life is a basic component of our understanding. The displacement of collective modes of living, of work, of ritual and sensibility, makes room for the elaboration of a media panorama, consumed and understood by people, individually. Ultimately, within a rising, universal marketplace *consumerism* is the basic social relationship established in place of customary bonds. It is sanctified by the Puritan admonition that salvation is a matter of *you,* and *you alone*... before God. It is secularized as the social form of a mass culture, of modernization. The universe of the commodity looms large with pain and promise, over *the consumer.* Much of what we experience reinforces this. Particularly within the framework of urban, industrial life. The *self* becomes the haunted repository of sensitivity, vulnerability, emotion, need, desire. The *commodity* increasingly invades the realm of satisfaction. The utopian struggle is caught between the two.

The very term "mass culture" underwrites this perspective. Mass culture is founded in the mass production of the *word,* and its dissemination as a commodity. As the self stands alone, the word of God, or the printed word, or media in general, or the facts, confront one with a universal image. Mass culture is for those who have become masses. The viability of a capitalist mass culture is predicated on the assumption that all others — other than ourselves — are strangers. Often, experience gives meaning to this perception.

Raymond Williams has put it well: "The masses are always others, whom we don't know, and can't know. Yet now, in our kind of society, we see these others regularly, in their myriad variations; stand, physically, beside them. They are here, and we are here with them. And that we are with them is of course the whole point. To other people, we also are masses. Masses are other people.... In an urban industrial society there are many opportunities for such ways of seeing."[11]

There is another side to the problem of "narcissism," or to the ways in which social life has been fragmented and plundered. Precisely as capitalism's rise has meant the fall for many of the customary bonds of mutual dependency, it has erected and elevated new systems of unification upon which we are deeply dependent: systems of communication and transport; agencies of mass production and mass impression. The "moon hoax" reveals their sensual potency at an early age. These systems are highly unified and collectivized in their own terms. Advertising, for example, has been called upon to organize masses of strangers into reliable, national markets of consumers. As Ronald Berman, a former head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, has approvingly observed, "advertising is engineered social order."[12] Within the context of the advertising industry, the goal is to link the isolated experience of the spectator with the collectivized impulses and priorities of the corporation. The contingencies of the *self* will be thwarted by the unity of the commodity and the facts of the marketplace. In the commodity lies a newly realized self, the promise of community. It is the most widely disseminated interpretation of

10. Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo.*

11. Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society* (New York, 1958), pp. 299-300.

12. This sector's development is explored suggestively in Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class,* although the revolutionary potential of this "new class" is too uncritically drawn. See also the work of Barbara and John Ehrenreich on the "Professional-Managerial Class."

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what could be. It, too, is a hoax.

Insofar as media imagery constitutes a system of unification, it has been employed to organize populations for patriotism, for self-denial, and for war. The general structure of a mass culture makes such mobilization increasingly possible. Recent times have witnessed such a development: a convergence of ominous imagery of different, vastly different sorts. Its description is necessarily confusing and difficult. I will call it simply "the coming war." This is not a prophecy, but a metaphor for the broad panorama of mass culture that has emerged in the United States as of late. It is important because it is what people see; it links people to an understanding, or a misunderstanding, of the world.

Whether or not there will be an actual war is a matter to be settled by our coming history. But either way, "the coming war" has emerged as a basic thread in much of what we consume in the way of image and information. In *its* broadside, *Esquire* has announced this as a shift in sensibility; a new spirit of *team play* has replaced concerns for *self.* But surely, without prejudice toward *Esquire,* one has not replaced the other. Within a mass culture, they perpetually coexist.

On the one hand, the current war hysteria may be understood as the rise of a national jingoism; a collectivized — albeit dangerous — sensibility. On the other, we are informed that a more aggressive U.S. presence around the world may be the only defense for our "standard of living." That is to say: for the "narcissistic," consumerist and estranged style of life promulgated within the tableau of American consumer society.

II

As capitalism has evolved a consumption-oriented mass culture, social, economic and political power has become increasingly coordinated and consolidated. To a large extent, the rise of modern management, communications, production and distribution has been dependent upon the appropriation and mobilization of technical and organizational capacities by a ruling, monopoly-capitalist class, administered by an emergent sector of professional-managerial intelligentsia. This increased coordination at the top levels of society has necessitated increasing fractionalization throughout the remaining popular majority. Within this systemic, organizational inequity, the appeal of advertising — for example — must be understood against the backdrop of a society where people's experience is continually framed by a culture in which social status, employment, and general viability are dissociated from popular association or customary networks of skill. In a world of strangers, survival is — to a large extent — a matter of appearance and surface impressions. Already by 1899, Thorstein Veblen noted that the constant mobility of an industrial population places people in a context where they are judged, more and more, by their ability to "display...goods."[13] The atomized self becomes the vehicle for general conformity.

Yet the paradigms for this organizational inequity are not limited to the arenas of the consumer marketplace. The unity of the atomized self and general standards of conformity, which at one moment may fuel our critique of consumer narcissism, may in the next find its complement in the political mobilization of a population towards war. Here, too, we observe the aesthetic resources of capitalist society converging to address a culturally scattered population. Their re-unification will be seen in the cemeteries and veterans' hospitals.

13. Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York, 1899).

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During the 1930s, Walter Benjamin — evaluating the rise of German fascism — argued that it was "war and war only" that could engender mass action on a broad scale, while at the same time "respecting the traditional property system," and the popular disunity it engenders. In Benjamin's estimation, war was the apotheosis of mass culture: the ultimate expression of a politics rendered aesthetic. If *economic* consumerism tends to organize disconnected individuals into coherent and predictable markets, it is *political* consumerism that defines the current state of western democracy, seeking to create a vast patriotic unity — a unity without solidarity. To Benjamin, the mass culture of war was one that could generate mass mobilization while at the same time posing no evident threat to the inequities of the property system.[14]

The current, ominous situation in the U.S. is one that provides ample support for Benjamin's argument. In terms of general, social fragmentation, it is rampant and aggravated. Yet amidst this general dislocation, recent months have witnessed the re-emergence of a military nationalism, threatening to become the basis for a new-found unity. The panorama served up by the mass media is increasingly and variously oriented toward the possibility of war; particularly fateful as U.S. capitalism experiences a general crisis in its ability to deliver on the post-World War II promises of suburban abundance. Where Jane Russell was once the image embodiment of the Marshall Plan — her bountiful breasts exported as a filmic promise of American nurturance on screens around the world — today's media images present us with a leaner and more tortured ideal.

The powerful role played by the mass media in modern life is both a function and a reflection of a society in which customary culture has been dismembered. While countervailing forces continue to assert themselves and contradictions remain, media, in its variety of forms, provide people with a way of understanding, of seeing the world in which they live. Given the renewed war euphoria, it is important for us to look at that window, to see the ways in which it has contributed to this development; placed around what is then called "reality." Through the media, we see the most available and imposing panorama of the social world.

III

Tabloid journalism in New York City presents an urban population with a mediated vision of its own environment and experience. Using the police blotter as a filter for its information, the horrors of city life are magnified and played upon in these papers, as acts of compassion are trivialized under the rubric of *good Samaritanism.* Collective escape from the terms of the commodity society are, in these media, represented characteristically by stories about Jonestown and the People's Temple; alternative culture is eternally equated with barbarism. Daily life at its most atomized level, where others are not merely strangers, but predatory strangers, becomes the mediation of *experience* via the press. A half hour with the *New York Post* each evening, and one feels lucky to have arrived home alive that day. Three quarters of an hour, and one jumps out of the window!

Overall, the media present us with a vision of chaos and disorganization. The disjointed format of "objective" news reporting — whether in the *National Enquirer* or the *New York Times* — adds to the chaos, and poses it as truth. Comprehensibility — connections between seemingly disparate items — is, for the most part, taboo. Some of what we see is distant, other is close to home; yet what unifies every-

14. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations* (New York, 1968), pp. 243-244.

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thing is its disunity. The vision is that of a world gone mad. This vision is not unconnected to the choreography of our daily lives. The chaos of the media world is one which speaks to the chaos of existence, and meets our glance in a world where alternative networks of analysis are few and far between. The world view of chaos — as projected by the media array — is intrinsically *narcissistic*, not in the sense that it talks about the self, but rather in that it re-enacts the shattered experience of the self on the level of a spectacle, a spectacle to be consumed. Mass life provides fertile soil for the consumption of the media panorama. In the media, "free-floating anxiety" — the psycho-pathology of everyday life — is made visible, is objectified before our eyes. Disconnected thoughts are organized into stories; each floats on pages enacting a general climate of danger, fear, and desire. Inner life is paraded before us, validated by a format which calls itself "objective."

In our eyes, in our ears, in our minds, the disparate images of a mass culture rendezvous to create a coherent vision of incoherence. Both our experience, and the general media panorama underwrite the need for some kind of unity, some kind of bond, and for some kind of solution; some action, some re-integration that will settle the chaos. Yet insofar as the mass culture posits and reflects a narcissistic disunity, it also generates its prescribed terms of order. In multiplying the evidence of fragmentation, it also, now, begins to articulate the terms of assimilation into order. The terms are war, or — more precisely — authoritarianism: the *moral economy of war.*

Glaring from the headlines, from the advertising pages, from the business section, from "sports," the terms of unification are established. Some of this may come to us in the form of centralized directives: administration policies broadcast as moralistic admonitions:

CARTER SEES NEED FOR PAIN AND DISCIPLINE

reads the front-page headline of the *New York Times*, March 15, 1980. Budget cuts in the public sector, increased military expenditure; Carter; Reagan; or Central Casting's candidate for president, John Anderson, these become the social infrastructure for unity, for moral fiber, for a population making a collective pilgrimmage towards austerity. Unity will be built on the shoulders of personal guilt. To believe the editorial rhetoric, we are paying the wages of sin for the self-indulgent seventies, the activist sixties, and the fabulous fifties.

The front page of the *New York Post*, January 18, 1980 declares:

WHITE HOUSE TALKS OF NUCLEAR WAR.

Apocalypse is the news of the day. On page three, where the story begins, we learn that "[n]o White House official has discussed such a possibility on the record," and that even in private, discussions have focused for the most part on conventional military response. Given the structure of the message, we are relieved. There will be merely "WAR," not "NUCLEAR WAR!" Opening with the proposition of total annihilation, we are continually comforted by the restraint of those in power. In life there is chaos; in authority, and on the editorial pages, there is order. This has been a convention of commercial journalism since the mid-19th century. A relation of power is reaffirmed in the structuring of information: co-ordination of those in power, fragmentation for the rest of us.

The moral economy of war is also general and indirect: an ether that infuses the senses. Much of what we see tends to generate a social and political climate *associated* with war crises, and with the mobilization of unity. Popular literature undergoes metamorphosis. The *Wall Street Journal* (March 9, 1979), informs us that "Joseph Heller gave war a bad name in his best-selling novel (*Catch 22*). So did James Jones with 'The Thin Red Line' and, more recently C.D.B. Bryan with

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'friendly Fire.' They made it all sound so grim and anti-heroic." The *Journal* indicates that recent trends in mass-market paperback publishing are re-evaluating this negativism. "Now the war-book market is rediscovering glory and idealism." Bantam Books is leading the way, we are told, toward a more pro-war position. Military literature, as published by Bantam, is moving toward a more "positive definition" of war. World War II will provide the proper context for this rediscovery. Quoting the general editor of the Bantam war-book series, the article informs us that "Men were admirable [in World War II]. They weren't just sitting around blowing smoke and listening to rock bands all day. They were admirable men." Among the alternative role models being offered are Nazi war heroes. Says another editor of the series, "There's something to be said for valor and for war, no matter whose side you're on."

Elsewhere, the advertising column of the *New York Times* (December 4, 1979) reports on a speech delivered by Lawrence Fouraker, dean of the Harvard Business School. Speaking to the Asssociation of National Advertisers, Fouraker suggested that those who sit on the boards of major "news gathering organizations — both print and broadcast — should supervise the editorial as well as the business side" of the operation. Corporate direction of news and information finds its roots in war (i.e., Creel's notorious Committee on Public Information, established during World War I), and is projected as a legitimate curtailment within the context of war. The further consolidation of the agencies of mass impression can be seen in the lately announced merger of J. Walter Thompson, the world's largest advertising agency, with Hill and Knowlton, the world's largest public relations firm, into what newspapers have described as a "monster image machine," a "giant image-making conglomerate handling many of the country's most powerful corporations." Against the chaos of the media panorama, the merger promises a move toward the greater unity of images.

The racial component of war mobilization has also gained momentum lately, as we read of Nobel prize winners — America's wise men — donating their wizened sperm for the purposes of fathering a master race. In war, historically, issues of racial purity and racial mission provide a particularly pernicious basis for unity. The marriage between wars of conquest and racism is too long to chronicle here, even within the limited horizon of American history.

Terms of unification are broadcast in a wide range of policies. Of particular interest are those policies aimed at dealing with hunger. For years, the corporate-liberal ideology hung to the notion of "the pursuit of happiness." It was fundamental to the rehtoric of the American dream, and continued — in distorted fashion — into the rhetoric of the 1970s. Hunger looms at home and abroad. Where food was once the ideological response to hunger, today's picture increasingly suggests the feasibility of an alternative solution: genocide. *Triage* is presented as the contemporary terminology for "responsible" social policy. The term has military roots: in the first world war; the wounded were separated out into three groups, the most wounded of which were left to die. Today the terminology has gained currency within the civilian context, applied as a solution; for West Bengal, for the South Bronx. The logic of war, with its conspicuous consumption of human life, becomes a source for the conceptualization of peace.

The above examples, culled from the media, offer direct and indirect ways in which policies of corporate and state authority are projected as visions of unification and order against the general mural of chaos. The media also have mechanisms for organizing our own personal lives — though they may be isolated and insular — into

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the semblance of unity. If social dislocation is the way that modern life is experienced — narcissistically — there are times that the media hold before us a vision, an image of ourselves, collectively, in union. Against the isolation of experience, there is something rather compelling about these spectacles of coherence, if not of camaraderie. These spectacles come in a variety of forms, but their general tendency is to create an "objective" environment of opinion; to pose a window on "reality," which sets the terms of some kind of fictional public discourse.

While in our day-to-day lives, in our thoughts, in private discussions among friends, there is little sense that we are engaged in a general, democratic process, that process is reified for us within the public displays of the mass culture. One day, Carter announces the re-institution of the draft registration. The next day, using a "man in the street" motif, we are told that America's youth supports this move. Scattered interviews with "representatives" of "America's youth" express a willingness, a fervor regarding the question of the draft. Who are we within this imaginary context? If we agree, the media has represented and unified our voice. If we disagree, we feel isolated, under seige.

The most prevalent form of this kind of "vulgar populism" can be found in the proliferation of polling, the most characteristic mode for American democracy. We are confronted with numbers, with percentages. They are us; we are them. The subjectivity of critical judgment reverberates against a wall of "evidence." Here, sociology is revealed — in the most general sense — as the underpinning of ideology: positivism and quantification erect an edifice of incontestability. An example is drawn from a nationwide ABC News-Harris survey of early February 1980. As reported in the papers (*New York Post,* February 27, 1980), we see ourselves as unified and integrated within a tangible body of public opinion:

AMERICA WOULD GO TO WAR TO HALT REDS ABROAD

In one of the most dramatic public opinion reversals ever, most Americans now say they'd back the use of U.S. troops to defend nations facing a Soviet invasion. Solid majorities in a new poll would support armed intervention to protect Western Europe, the Persian Gulf, Pakistan and Iran...

In the mid-1970s, the vast majority of Americans were unwilling to support the use of troops almost anywhere in the world.

That sentiment remained in vogue until Moslem militants in Tehran took Americans hostage last November.

Now, the poll of 1,198 likely voters, conducted early this month, found these views:

—If the Red Army moved into Western Europe, 67% say the use of U.S. troops would be justified; 23% say it would not...

—By 75-18 percent, a wide majority backs the new Carter Doctrine to use troops to defend the Persian Gulf oil routes.

—A 53-35 percent majority favors armed intervention to help defend Pakistan in the event of a Soviet attack.

—Remarkably, in view of the continuing hostage crisis, a 53-37 percent majority would back sending troops to Iran to fight Russians.

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Within the framework of the poll, the source and framing of questions comes from policy makers, those in power. They establish the terms of what might happen. Yet the sociological component of the story is the most essential. In this, and in other polls, we see ourselves brought together into groups of people that don't exist. The individualized structure of experience is mirrored within a palpable collectivity that claims to reflect the voice of the people, yet generally reflects the interests and agendas of corporate and governmental policy. As Ann Landers gives us samples of how we feel individually, the polls tell us how we feel collectively. The abstraction of numbers by which we see ourselves reproduces our own abstraction from the contexts of community, and from active, political collectivities. We must turn to the polls, because they are what provides a symbolic escape from the extreme provinciality of experience, as they provincialize our experience. In the polls, we become a part of the spectacle, of the primary, allowable unity, the universal idiom of a mass culture. Yet as we do this — as we are spectators to our own opinions — we are rarely cognizant of the ways in which sociology is one of the most potent legitimations of ideology, codifying militarism as the ostensible will of the people.

If polls provide a cold and objective, numerical escape from the qualities of private experience, the media also use the idiom of personal life as a way of symbolically humanizing what are cold and objectivist decisions coming from the highest levels of collectivized power. While those speaking in the following article are "Administration officials, members of Congress, specialists on foreign policy and others, liberals as well as conservatives," their perspective is projected as an estimation of what is euphemistically called "Public Opinion."

Yet where "Public Opinion" is sometimes constructed *vis-à-vis* sociological collectivities, here it is couched completely in the idiom of the individual psyche, *à la psychobabble*. The article, in which policy makers offer their estimation of the broad "attitudinal" implications of the "Hostage Crisis" in Iran, cites the lingo of narcissism continually, yet establishes it in a context of solid conformism. Iran, they contend, represents a "political and psychological watershed far more important than the immediate concern over the American hostages in Tehran. They view the situation as a pivotal event marking the close of the post-Vietnam era." The article continues: " 'In terms of domestic politics, this has put an end to the Vietnam syndrome,' said a senior official who has served several Administrations. George W. Ball, a former Under Secretary of State who is still called to counsel policy makers, captured the sense of many here when he said that the nation was overcoming 'its sense of guilt, its complexes' over the Vietnam war. Another policy maker said that 'we are moving away from our post-Vietnam reticence.' Still others speak of 'a turning point in our attitude toward ourselves,' and there is a feeling that we have a right to protect legitimate American interests anywhere in the world" (*New York Times*, December 2, 1979).

Such journalism represents a containment policy against any systematic discussion of what are called "legitimate American interests." It employs a terminology completely wed to the narcissistic social structure. Vietnam becomes an attitude. A nationwide resistance movement is disassembled by the language of the individual. The anti-war movement is the symptom of a neurotic, national individual. A war fervor is enunciated in terms of self-realization and therapeutic breakthrough. When a world political view is essential to our understanding, the language of personality is adhered to; memory of social movement evaporates gradually in its wake.

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In the above samples, the languages of narcissism and collectivity interact in the depiction and accentuation of a war hysteria, and of the American political framework in general.

The structural confusions of the mass culture also permeate the imagery of the civilian consumer economy, where personal choice and conformity have long operated in unison. Advertising utilizes the realm of war to inform its mode of perception.

One glaring example of this has been the recent vodka war. The issue: Russian vodka. While the buying of Russian vodka has rarely been a political choice, current circumstances encourage such a perspective. The battle is the battle of the two communisms: Russian and Chinese. Here,within the ads,political alliances become the basis for individual consumer choice "Is *Tsingtao* winning the cold war?" asks the ad, as a picture shows two bottles of vodka — one *Tsingtao* (Chinese) and the other *Stolichnaya* (Russian) — being poured into separate glasses of ice.

Here the logic of the personal realm is completely invaded by that of power politics. After all, *Stolichnaya* was not drunk for political reasons, but because of its regarded quality. Without any long tradition of vodka production, one might just as well buy vodka produced in Newark as that from China. But the general climate of the media panorama encourages such displacements, such comparisons. To buy Russian vodka is to support the invasion of Afghanistan. To buy Chinese vodka is to support Chinese-American friendship. Personal taste and political directives become interchangeable.

Reportedly, the greatest impact has been on domestically produced vodkas, which have long tried to project the image of authenticity through the use of Russian names and advertising motifs. Now these image policies smack of disloyalty, causing havoc among U.S. producers of vodka. The business section of the *New York Times* (March 13, 1980) reports that "Vodka marketers are making great efforts to show they are unaffiliated with the folks who sent troops into Afghanistan." Gordon's vodka launches a campaign advertising itself as "the smoothest vodka on our native tong," while Smirnoff, after years of capitalizing on its Russian name, proclaims the ultimate fidelity to an aggressive American jingoism in a full-page ad that in boldface announces: SMIRNOFF VODKA SALUTES THE UNITED STATES HOCKEY TEAM (*Times*, February 25, 1980).

While personal independence has long been the emblem of peacetime American advertising, the current trend is characteristic of wartime advertising, most notably that of the first and second world wars. The patriotic imperative reorganizes the world of commodities and consumers.

The varities of this development are legion, and while some are overtly political in tone, there is a wide range of images that serve, subliminally, to organize the moral economy of war. The area of women's fashion is particularly interesting, as fashion and imagery has throughout its history been connected to issues of social struggle and-or social conformity. From the 1960s onward — continuing clothing "reform" dating to the mid-19th century — the trend in women's clothing has been toward a freer garb, less constricting, less dramatic in its enunciation of gender. Yet now, fashion images increasingly reappropriate traditional styles, styles from the past. This has also been a recurrent mode. One variation of this development is in fact called the "Retro" look, an abbreviation of retrogressive. One ad invites women to "Retrogress with Givenchy!" The look is an approximation of the wartime 1940s styles; severe and highly defined in terms of gender. Elsewhere we

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see the reappearance of the Gibson Girl of the early 1900s. While at that time, the Gibson look was a step forward from the hobbling and corsetry of an earlier era, in the current context it is no less than a return to a time when men were men, and women were women. Tight at the waist, broad at the breast and hips, the Gibson style accentuates the reproductive functions of women at a time when many women have been struggling to transcend the limits of such a primary self-definition. This return to "femininity" is part of a broad cultural counter-assault against issues raised on behalf of women's rights; it is also an essential component of the war mentality. It is women, in their customary domain — hearth and home — who have historically provided men with a reason to fight. The reconstitution of a home-bound woman within the symbolic realm of fashion places the logic of the battle more securely in the hearts and minds of men. The collapse of the idea of a sexually integrated draft in the winter and spring of 1980 may have had as much to do with assembling the ideological conditions of war, as it does with the refusal of many women to see the "plum" of a male-female draft as a meaningful gain in sexual equality. In any event, the rejection of the idea of drafting women was part of the path toward re-instituting the draft for men.

An ad for the Gibson look reasserts the romantic vulnerability of womanhood: "The Gibson girl. She's romantic. Spirited. Witty. An inspiration for today. All this, for her. From you . . . Ribbon her waist. . . Her tender nights. . . Give coquettish innocence . . . Give her a white gardenia. . . High drama, our boa to wreathe her. . . ." The ad, appearing December 1979, is aimed at men, suggesting Christmas gifts for women. The gifts will mold a mood, a relationship; the idiom of male protection and female vulnerability permeates the message as it asserts the sexual climate-cliché of war.

IV

The array of images is so broad, so diverse, so universal, that any discussion of them must end abruptly. They go on as a landscape. As a landscape, the media panorama — to a large extent — provides us with a credible "reality." It is far-reaching and disparate, but it is also, particularly in moments when social and political alternatives are strung out between dogmatism and despair, able to provide people with the semblance of a unified world view. It is a mass-consumed charade of a totality; its only meaning is in our ability to make sense of it in our own terms. If it is the mode of a mass culture to appropriate the popular imagination into the facticity of its words and images, it is our task to appropriate this facticity within a critical and transcendent imagination.

Since the rise of print, the idea of democracy has been closely associated with the availability of the word, so that all might have access. Democratic struggles have long been associated with the idea of an informed citizenship, capable of critically interpreting their world. This idea has stood as a bedrock against tyrannies. Within the media panorama we see the truncation of this principle. Images and words proliferate; all have access, yet increasingly, the interpretations are already made, alternatives already expelled. A kind of democratic despotism. The media panorama is an issue of political moment. In it we see phantoms of ourselves; living out a political life, a material life and a dream life within the terms of the social marketplace. Like the proverbial children, we are seen but not heard.

Too often, those of us who are of the anti-capitalist opposition tend to turn from the analysis of ideological power. It is as if the analysis would assert some kind of determinacy, foreclosing the possibility of resistance. Each time the question of

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hegemony is raised, a story of resistance is told; as if the very raising of the question of ideology threatens the populist fantasy of an autonomous and perpetually heroic "common folk"; read — sometimes — "working class."

To demand that reality be only perceived in the frame of successful struggle, resistance and popular heroism is a dangerous and deceptive game to play. It may stand in the way of political thought and action. The social and historical dynamics of contemporary capitalism should not be obscured in favor of a "working class" that is, at the same time, downtrodden and autonomous; plundered yet ideologically self-determined. This is the stuff of Hollywood. Such visions place us in the questionable position of being the most vociferous current champions of the liberal ideology of American pluralism.

The role of media and mass culture both *in* war and *as* war, their ability to mobilize popular sentiment, has a hazardous and instructive history. Its successes have been founded in the ability to define the realm of popular literacy, the terms of that literacy.

Beyond continual political analysis, it is necessary to challenge that dominion. The challenge must take place within the realm of popular literacy and vision. Only if the mass culture is understood within a battle to re-define the boundaries of social space can political struggles begin to break through the chaos. If war, or the moral economy of war, takes place on the level of the cultural panorama, it is on that level that resistance must take place.

A lesson to be learned from the underground press of the sixties is that of its cultural vision. Recognizing and battling the petrification of dominant cultural imagery, the underground press — given its limitations — dramatically reclaimed a place within the realm of popular literacy and vision. The word jumped out of its columns, became visual; the image became conceptual. For a moment, the media panorama was invaded, and its most dazzling lights came from among the forces of opposition. Imagination was pitted against the facts of life, inverting the familiar logic of cultural domination.

Such an alternative form and vision is crucial today: there is need to reclaim a place within the vernacular arena of literacy that now lies under military siege. The images that bombard and oppose us must be reorganized. We must figure out how to present these images imaginatively, so as to give a critical order to the chaos. Literacy in general must be extended in the area of critical, cultural analysis and understanding. The spectacle must be acted upon collectively.

Likewise, we must seek to be visionary, utopian. If our critique of the commodity culture points to better alternatives, let us explore — in our billboards of the future — what they might be. At a time when people are isolatedly aware of the hazards of the consumer culture, the absence of coherent alternatives is tragic. Socialist reveries must be liberated from the confines of esoteric debate. As William Appleman Williams said recently, we must begin to imagine what a "world without empire" might be like. The absence of such dreams is conspicuous within the accessible panorama of today's culture.

I read my words over, and I feel the weight of this absence.

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NARCISSISM AND THE FAMILY

by Joel Kovel

To pursue the psychological and social relations of narcissism is to enter a swamp. However, that swamp happens to be a real part of the world. Consider some of its dimensions:

—Narcissism is an aspect of personal life without which human existence would not be thinkable. One treads softly about the word "normal" but in this case we must assume that narcissism, as the location of desire in the self, is ubiquitous, and indeed transhistorical. Moreover, when we talk of a "healthy narcissism," we are not positing an idle or meaningless value.

—An exaggerated narcissism is an aspect of real, if difficult to conceptualize, disorders. Psychotics are invariably narcissistic, by which we mean inordinately self-preoccupied, as are adolescents at their most unpleasant. Further, there is a host of character types whom one must call "narcissistic." These people may not be formally neurotic or psychotic, yet are market by a peculiar self-organization. Prone to disturbances in self-esteem, they are variously cold, remote or empty in their relations. At the end of "normalcy" they slide with imperceptible gradualness into something that is best called "alienation," or estrangement.

—Narcissism, or desire located in the self, is never self-contained. It is always referred rather to something besides the self, the *other*, or object. To be exact, we regard the *other* as the figure (or ground) in the world against which the self is drawn, while the object as such is the terminus point of desire. In general, we may regard the *other* and the object as two aspects of the same entity. Their existence reminds us that the self is actively and socially constructed. In Marx's words, it is indeed the "ensemble of social relations."[1]

—But Marx did not take into account the decisive feature by means of which the self-*other* dialectic takes its varying forms: the ontogenesis of the self in infantile experience, and of the *other*, therefore, as being composed in some way out of the infant's body and his-her key real others, the parents. In other words, narcissism is concretely rooted in the family.

—Narcissism is a mythic structure celebrating and yearning for ripeness. It is an essential element, as developed by Marcuse,[2] in utopian and transcendent thought.

—Narcissism is also necessarily political in an immediate sense. That is, it is as historical as it is transhistorical. And, as this conference testifies, it is a focal issue of contemporary society. Lasch's recent work[3] is but a manifestation of this centrality. There is ample evidence that something akin to the "culture of narcissism" pervades contemporary American life, and that it plays a powerful role in the fortunes of capitalism. Substantial questions persist, however, as to just what that role is; moreover, the articulation between several dimensions of the matter remain largely unspecified. For even a swamp has its real composition.

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1. K. Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, Easton and Guddat, editors (Garden City, 1967), p. 401.
2. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (New York, 1955).
3. Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York, 1978).

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We may begin with a review of so-called "normal" narcissism,[4] then proceed to consider the narcissistic character and its relation to narcissism on a historical scale. As stated above, the ubiquity of narcissism cannot be doubted, although the multiplicity of its forms requires some elaboration. Narcissism is the fundamental quality of all relationships in which the orientation is such that the *other* imparts value to the self. It includes ordinary selfishness or self-centeredness, then, but is by no means limited to these traits. For the self and its *other* can take on many guises. Narcissism involves all matters of self-regard and evaluation. It is contained in the relations of the self to the outside, as in questions of pride, vanity, dignity, self-adornment, and so on; and it is contained in relations of the self to itself, as in the area of self-regard, ideals, goals, and, indeed, in values themselves. In these relations, one part of the self plays the role of *other* to the remainder. In psychoanalytic parlance, then, we speak of the *ego-ideal* or *superego* as invested narcissistically. This is another way of saying that they are internalized states of the *other*. Religious belief has a strong narcissistic component, with the deity as the integral of all *others*, and so does political belief, with party or the classless society playing the same role. Whether or not something entails narcissism, however, is only loosely coupled with its validity, although the "fit" between the narcissistic value of a thing and its objective quality is a matter of some importance. Fervor of belief, of course, can have powerful real consequences, even if the belief be in something absurd or destructive. On the other hand, the obvious and politically significant fact that socialist and egalitarian goals can at times be pursued with highly narcissistic and non-rational purposes does not invalidate the rational core of the goals themselves. Finally, as if matters were not complicated enough already, we should note that the narcissistic relationship never exists in pure form. In the real world it is admixed with object-oriented relata in which the object is desired not as *other* to the self, but *in itself* as a source of gratification. In sexuality, for example, the genital of the other person is usually seen simultaneously from two sides: as object, i.e., as bearer of pleasure; and as *other* i.e., as some missing part of the self, to be claimed. The proportions of object-related and narcissistic orientations vary widely in different circumstances; and it is the preponderance of one or the other we have in mind when we say that such and such (for example, a sexual encounter) is narcissistic or not.

That the matter should turn out to be so complicated is owing not to caprice but to some basic peculiarities inherent in the formation of the human self. Indeed, narcissism as such is not some quality appended to a prefabricated self-organization. It is rather an essential element of the formation of that self.

Therefore we speak of *primary* and *secondary* narcissism as deployments of desire occurring at critically different phases of self-organization. The first concept, primary narcissism, is somewhat hypothetical yet necessary, for it refers to the infant's investment in itself before any differentiation is made between self and other. In this undifferentiated phase there is no articulation of self as such, although there is a relationship to objects, primarily the breast. The object that is sought, however, is not distinguished from the subject that seeks it. There is no *other*, no

4. It is not my intention here to review or provide a guide to the substantial psychoanalytic literature on narcissism, or to situate myself with regard to the numerous unresolved controversies that beset this topic. The reader should of course begin with Freud's 1914 essay, *On Narcissism* (Standard Edition, XIV, 67-102), but remember that this piece is a preliminary foray of Freud's, an attempt to bring the theory of the libido into line with obviously vital issues of self-experience. It by no means closes the theoretical books. For the current range of thinking, see *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association,* vol. 22, 1974, pp. 243-329.

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self-consciousness and no estrangement. Insofar as things are perceived, they are apprehended as being all of a piece, a piece in which there is no special location of an observing, experiencing "I," or *cogito*. Because of this basic fusion the omnipotence of thought that characterizes states of desire, and which is the real evidence for primary narcissism, arises. This omnipotence, first delineated by Ferenczi,[5] is the nucleus of all neurotic and psychotic formations. It is also continued into all later narcissistic developments, especially those of the ego-ideal and superego.

Secondary narcissism is a clearer matter, although based on a more complex state of development. It is the investment of regard in the self as it emerges in a differentiated way from others. Moreover — and this is key — the regard comes from a person left behind and is the condition of the separation. In other words, secondary narcissism is beset with the hazards of separation. The affection and joy with which infants are beheld as they mature is in a very real sense a kind of shielding nest protecting the helpless young as they traverse the path to individuality. And the narcissism we develop inwardly is also a barrier against self-vulnerability. Freud felt that secondary narcissism was a reflux of libido: first from the ego onto object, then back from object to ego. Though this may describe the process from the vantage of a developing subject, it does not encompass its full complexity. For narcissism is not simply an instinctual matter; it is also the internalization of a real relationship. The baby develops a notion of self charged with the actual regard she-he has received from the parent. Our self-esteem is, it is said, but the internalized gleam in our mother's eye.

Any separation between inside and outside, between, that is, the subject's desire and the object's regard, is highly artificial. It is, ultimately, desire that becomes located narcissistically. But this desire is itself determined by the objects to which it is directed. Infants come to love themselves if they loved the parents who loved them; only then is the gleam in the eye, and later the parents' praise, internalized as a healthy narcissism.

A host of things can go wrong with this scheme. The conjunction of omnipotence of thought and infantile helplessness guarantees narcissistic vulnerability to the human species. This vulnerability is particularly extreme at the primary end, when the omnipotence of ideas is at its zenith and no realistic appreciation exists to modify the impact of unpleasant stimuli. Anyone who watches the catastrophic reaction of a little baby to hunger or a wet diaper will understand what I mean. The infant is provided at first with little but an all-purpose distress signal. Everything else is left to the adult who is roused by this call to do something about it. The dyad (baby with scream — effecting adult) is the original unit of competency, to be replaced later by the grown individual's full set of powers. However, narcissism lingers as the record of transition from the dyadic person to the individual, remaining as a kind of inverted testimonial not to the real objective weakness of the baby but to its grandiosity and omnipotence of thought. Thus, the internalized *other* is a composite, derived in part from the figure of the effecting adult and in part from the infant's own grandiosity. We have here the basis for the absolutism of conscience and ideal. It is a profound irony that infantile omnipotence be so closely related to real human power. The balance is a delicate one: without the impetus of omnipotent thought, power would not assert itself. Yet the real power, once achieved, also tames, or at least

5. Sandor Ferenczi, "Stages in the Development of the Sense of Reality," in *First Contributions to Psychoanalysis* (London, 1952), p. 213-239.

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walls off, the sense of omnipotence. This is as true for small children as it is for adults. And a failed power is also a failure of that barrier, being accompanied by a reflux of infanitle omnipotence. We see this most strikingly in the psychoses, but the relationship exists elsewhere.

It follows that bridges of transition need to be provided lest narcissism remain in its raw and destructive early infantile form. From another angle, mere parenting is not enough: a widening zone of social objects must be provided if human powers are to be realized. In sum, a real community, which is to say, one grounded in unalienated work and social relations, is the path from infantile omnipotence to adult power. This is by way of saying that the individual who replaces the infant is no monad, either. In place of the original effecting parent, the individual now is an effective member of a community.

So much for the ideal case. To see what has happened in real America, we may turn to a closer examination of the so-called narcissistic characters in accordance with the principle that mental pathology, like the prison, provides a true indication of the level of civilization achieved by society.

No statistics exist for these matters, yet it is fairly clear from the informal reports of psychoanalysts that, at least for the bouregeoisie, there are increasing numbers of patients who present disorders of narcissism. Indeed, the concept scarcely existed in the early days of analytic practice, whereas now it is a leading category. Psychoanalysis, to be sure, plays a highly ambiguous role in the naming of disorders. No less a shaper of rules of discourse than a reflector of reality, psychoanalysis is thoroughly immersed in the totality it seeks to comprehend. But this only underscores the significance of its surging experience with narcissistic patients.

The appelation, "narcissistic character," is not an easy one to grasp, and no progress will be made at all if it is viewed in the same light as the symptom neuroses, or, indeed, along the lines of other disturbances of character. It is not, for example, the same thing as excessive vanity or "egoism," i.e., those states of character in which narcissism is, so to speak, worn on the sleeve — and in which, correspondingly, deeper structures of the self may have different and less narcissistic qualities. Disturbed narcissism is rather a separate dimension of its own; it can coexist quite well with the classical neurotic syndromes and character problems. What is peculiar about it lies not in any particular pattern of functional distress, but rather in a troubled form of human relationship. This is often masked at first, so that, typically, problems of narcissistic pathology do not become manifest until the treatment is under way. What one learns then is that the individual suffers from a kind of *emptiness*. Experience seems drained and lifeless, without real texture. It is not that things are not perceived sharply — for usually the narcissistic character is if anything hypersensitive; and it is not that correct functioning is impossible — for quite often, the world being what it is, the individual functions at quite a high level. It is rather that, in the zone of felt experience between perception and action, a kind of cold hollowness transpires. The fit between such people and the world is never perfect, whatever the high level of functional adaptation they may evince. For no matter how they *do*, the narcissistic nature of the problem is revealed by an inordinate vulnerability in the area of self-regard. Sometimes manifest by grandiosity and arrogance, at other times by feelings of worthlessness and inadequacy, and often enough sliding into a kind of depression that differs from classical depressions in its admixture of numbness — the narcissistic individual earns his label.

It is an odd feature of this disorder — and one that makes it a curio so far as public health measurements go — that the diagnosis can only be made in a psycho-

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analytic setting. Any other context is simply unable to penetrate through the wall of pseudo-functioning thrown up by the narcissistic individual. In the analytic relationship, however, the characteristically cold and bleak personal quality soon enough comes to the fore. And with this we learn some other things as well. The narcissistic character is not indifferent to people, or withdrawn from them, as so-called schizoid individuals are. The other person is generally quite essential for them — but only as a bearer of supplies, in short, as a virtually pure *other* to the narcissistic self. At the same time, this *other* is regarded with a good deal of hostility and contempt. For the narcissist, personal relations are in terms of power. The narcissist cannot tolerate weakness in the self and seeks it constantly in others, bringing it out in them if necessary through an artful process of belittlement.

Otto Kernberg[6] and Heinz Kohut,[7] the leading psychoanalytic investigators of disturbed narcissism, agree that the best way of making sense of this picture is to postulate the existence of a so-called "grandiose self" — a distinct organization of self-experience intermediate between the official persona presented to the world and an innermost state of affairs against which it defends. In the grandiose self the omnipotence of early infancy is attached to an alter ego whose existence may not be avowed by the individual who bears it. This alternate subject is positioned behind the official persona and guides it, therefore, without having to contact the world itself. It is by maintaining this split in self-experience that the sick narcissist is able to avoid psychosis, and often enough, detection, either by others or oneself. Kohut and Kernberg have major differences, however, concerning the significance of the grandiose self, the former regarding it as an aberration of normal self-organization while the latter sees it as an entirely pathological formation. These differences are of little concern to us here and can be most usefully referred to different portions of a spectrum, Kohut's notion being rather more applicable to people on the normal end, and Kernberg's to those who are relatively greatly estranged. Of the two, I regard Kernberg as the trenchant thinker inasmuch as he gives real credence to the role of hostility and hatred in the narcissistic character, while Kohut seems prone to an idealistic rendering. My own experience, in any case, supports Kernberg's basic formulation, and goes as follows: once we, so to speak, discover the grandiose self we learn that it, too, has a defensive position. The narcissist's posture of grandiose coldness, the retreat from real human contact, mask a deeper layer of self-experience which is, in subjective reality, painfully weak. This underside of the grandiose self is the experience of a ravenous infant, beset with a diffuse type of oral rage that bids to devour everything in sight, and, indeed, annihilate the subject, along with the object, were it exposed. The grandiose self is, then, a negation of this deeper aspect, and serves to keep the narcissistic individual away from situations where this weakness and desire would become exposed. And this grandiose self is itself masked by a veneer of social adaptation.

The term "veneer" applies here in a serious way. For while the narcissistic character is often enough a perfectly well-functioning citizen, one finds on a closer look that the flaws in the narcissist's character have exacted a peculiar, and quite specific, toll. For their social engagement is, literally, veneer-like. It is without much depth of attachment and quite specifically, without a notion of transcendence or universality. In other terms, the narcissistic character is unable to affirm a unity of project or purpose, a common goal, with other people in a way that goes beyond immediacy

6. Otto Kernberg, *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism* (New York, 1975)
7. Heinz Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self* (New York, 1971).

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or instrumentality. They often do fine with the rules for everyday alienated discourse, but cannot go beyond and are therefore lost to class-consciousness, history and, necessarily, the future. I would call this veneer-like quality of social relation the *de-sociation* of the narcissistic character. It is one of the central features of the problem, and certainly the one of greatest interest to us here. I should add at this point, that I definitely do not regard narcissistic de-sociation as the sole, or even necessarily the principle way that people are cut off from class-consciousness or other manifestations of universality. It is, however, a particularly strategic one in the present juncture of advanced capitalism, at least for bourgeois individuals.

Let us review what has been said: I am claiming, on the basis of psychoanalytic praxis, that there are numerous individuals in our society who suffer multiple and severe self-alienation of a narcissistic sort. A few are troubled enough by failures in love and work — and sufficiently imbued with psychoanalytic discourse — to seek help. We cannot help but assume, however, that these individuals represent a far larger body of narcissistically troubled people — many less troubled, to be sure, and many others as, or more troubled while less inclined, or able to seek help. Moreover, the conclusion is inescapable that conditions of contemporary American life are bringing more and more of this type of problem to the fore. Recall the two makes of the film, "Invasion of the Body Snatchers." The 1956 version was saturated with Cold War propaganda and showed the attacked town retaining its integrity, while that of 1978 revealed a total penetration of alien existence into the city. The penetration itself — the taking over of people by alien and emotionally dead forces — was a representation of the type of narcissistic disturbance we have been describing here, while the progression between the two films gives a sense of the rapidly developing history of the disorder. The problem before us now, however, is to describe its mediations in the contemporary family.

The first thing that strikes me about the narcissistic individuals I have worked with closely is the lack of what might be called an overtly traumatic quality in their family experience. This is not to say that they were happy with what transpired there, or that they feel close to their parents. Far from it. The are quite generally full of an overweening hatred of their parents — a hatred, however, that never is authentically expressed owing to a persistent dependence upon the older generation. Objectively, this dependence is not to be confused with a relationship that is either close or loving. Often — especially under the scattering conditions of contemporary life — the individual hardly ever sees her-his family, indeed, shuns them. However, they remain dependent in the sense that parental judgements loom excessively large, often causing feelings of panic. Thus the dependence is mainly secured subjectively. The subjective side of this dependence is an extreme, florid and hate-filled fantasy life concerning the parents: indeed it is the very intensity of this fantasy which renders hatred monstrous and prevents its expression.

From another angle, what makes this hatred so monstrous is its lack of reasonable cause — i.e., the lack of gross trauma. The parents often fluttered about when they were little, and belonged neither to the brutalizing, punitive, rejecting type nor to those whose contact might carry seduction to the point of incest. This "contact" — i.e., the real nature of the parent-child bond — seems to have itself been of a narcissistic character. The child was regarded as an adornment of the parent, rather than a creature in her-his own right; and this parental concern had the quality of capital invested for a future yield. But this yield was itself no more — or less — than a "normally narcissistic" pride or respect on the parent's part, a pride which was rationalized because it belonged to the prevailing relations of the bourgeois

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community and which, being rationalized, was reasonable from the parent's standpoint and carried out with relatively little fuss.

Relative, that is, to the perception of the child, for whom every glance of the parent is a swordthrust of the *other*. The parent, with a kind of reason on her or his side, regards the child as "overly sensitive" even as the latter sees the parent as murderously intrusive. From the child's standpoint, the parent cannot win: affection is construed as invasion, and restraint as gross neglect. We have what is to later appear as a "failed" relationship with the primary parental object. Often the only element of the relationship which resists failure is the quality of adornment: at least, the two of them reason, the child can make the parent proud. Or, just as often, the child can fail in the world and so frustrate the parents' hopes for narcissistic aggrandizement. But this, too, is a sign that the narcissistic element is the one that has "taken" between the two of them; even if used for the purposes of spite, it still constitutes a real bond, better than the icy distancing which seems the only other way out of the cauldron that is the child's growing perception of his-her relations with the older generation. The narcissistic dimension is at the same time the plane of cleavage along which intimate relationships fall apart and the framework around which they are rebuilt as grandiose self. For in this self-system the child's primary sense of omnipotence meets the parent's judging function. The stabbing felt by the parent's seemingly innocuous signals are in fact promptings of the child's own imperious self-demands triggered by the parent. But because the grandiose self is perceived as alien, these promptings are not recognized as the child's own, and are reprojected as hatred out into the world where they fuse with the perception of the anxious, praising and-or judgmental parent. This process in turn walls the grandiose self further off from both outside world and the remainder of the subject: in short, it is the self-perpetuating cycle by which that self-system is inculcated and grows. And when it grows too big, or is too larded with hatred, we have that edge of the contemporary spectrum who are called "narcissistic characters" and end up in analyst's offices.

We must account for this situation historically, for it is manifestly a historical state of affairs. Primitive societies do not accumulate persons of this type, nor, so far as I know, do socialist societies, feudal societies or even capitalist societies through the nineteenth century. If we take, for example, the work of an author such as George Eliot for a guide, we will see that in her carefully wrought and expansive treatment of a society that was very much in the grip of capitalist relations, scarcely an individual who meets the description of pathological narcissism, outlined above, is to be found. And while such evidence is by no means "proof," I think it a fair assumption that this type of individual was not prevalent then, and played no role in the totality of early capitalist society. This phenomenon may have something to do with the atavistic clingings of religious faith which capitalism permitted until quite recently and with the vestigial maintenance, so touchingly recounted by Eliot, of the remnants of an earlier community. However true these observations may be, they remain incomplete without a grasp of their interconnection with the life of the family, and with subjectivity in general.

To return to our consideration of the family, the lack of overt trauma in the family relations of narcissistically disturbed individuals was stressed in order to highlight a deeper point. For when the particular traumata which lend an individual stamp to each case fade out, we are left with the distinct impression that what crushes the developing person under a weight of sick narcissism is *nothing but the family itself,* a family that is itself de-sociated is the breeding ground for de-sociated

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individuals. For the scission of the family from organic, productive and reciprocal relations with the community forces the energy of that family in upon the developing individual. In the superheated environment which results the person is molded in the direction of pathological narcissism. One may schematize further: the bourgeois age is, among other things, that age of a family centered upon children. It is therefore the era in which childhood emerges for the first time in history as a distinct category of existence. Pathological narcissism is then fundamentally the outcome when the family, so to speak, is not merely centered on children but collapses upon them as well, crushing them beneath its weight. It is therefore a specific disorder for that phase of capitalist development in which such a collapse occurs. Pathological narcissism is a pox of late capitalism.

Aries,[8] DeMause[9] and Shorter,[10] among others, have chronicled the rise of the bourgeois family as a child-centered entity; while Poster[11] and Zaretsky[12] have developed the central role capitalism has played in the process. Through its need for a mobile labor force, through its usurpation of domestic production, through its whole philosophy of the individual contract and its promotion of bourgeois democracy, capitalism knocked the underpinnings away from patriarchy and the traditional community, and sent the family on the path of nucleation which it is still traversing. The same movement of development that created the nuclear family gave to the class in power, the bourgeoisie, the means of directing its command over resources toward the nurturance of children. For among these resources must be reckoned that of time itself. In the infinitely expansible system of exchange that constitutes the fabric of capitalist relations, an equation may be readily drawn between surplus-value and time. The appropriation of the former by the bourgeoisie is simultaneously an appropriation of the latter. And this freed time, stolen from labor, is concretely invested in the care of the young. With increasing productivity and the decline in the need for child labor, the same gift was belatedly — and with substantial compromises — returned to the upper strata of the working class. By the late nineteenth century childhood had become at least an affordable dream for the bulk of the population.

It may be said that the ideology of a good childhood — at least a "better" one for each successive generation — represents one of the real promises of capitalist society. Converged in this new category are the twinned hopes for material abundance and the development of the individual, with all the notions of freedom so entailed. But it has always been the case that the freed time with which childhood in the bourgeois world has been filled is in fact unfree time, time stolen through the domination of labor, which domination reproduces itself in everyday life. More concretely, the family set loose by the breakup of the older extended community has always been, however ideology may have it, adrift on an open boat in a shark-infested sea. The essentially predatory nature of capitalist society, coupled with the coldness of its exchange-dominated social relations, forces the family in on itself. An increasingly desperate defensiveness appears in family relations and saps the very development of the individual for which the family was intended. To return for a moment to George Eliot, we observe in *The Mill On The Floss* that Maggie Tulliver's father loses his family-owned mill and is made to undertake the wage-labor of managing it for the

8. Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood* (New York, 1962).
9. Lloyd De Mause, *The History of Childhood* (New York, 1974).
10. Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York, 1975).
11. Mark Poster, *Critical Theory of the Family* (New York, 1978).
12. Eli Zaretsky, *Capitalism, The Family and Personal Life* (New York, 1976).

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new owner. The humiliation destroys him and his family. Specifically it forces Maggie, who had been his darling for the future, to retreat to the hearth in a vain — and self-crippling — attempt to console him for his losses. I find this situation paradigmatic of the fundamental insecurity that afflicts the nuclear family in a world of capitalist predation — and it specifically pinpoints the burden imposed upon the women who have been assigned the task of consolation at the cost of their own individuation.

It does not, however, prefigure the specifically narcissistic turn of events. So long as the family remains a bastion against the outer world, so long, that is, as it sustains its own integrity, then it may inculcate limitations of all kinds, including the contours of what we recognize as neurosis, but will not introduce the disorder of narcissism itself. For the "integrity" of a family is simply the integral of the integrity of its members. From the standpoint of the developing child, what this means is that she-he is exposed to a coherent set of behaviors on the part of parental figures. The adult is seen as the same person throughout the range of interactions with the child: gratification is connected to prohibition and control to intimacy. The parent may be dreadful or wanting, but she-he is who she-he is, and is either there or not there. What this means subjectively is that the *other* to whom the self relates in the process of narcissistic development becomes, as the child's maturation allows it, a recognizable human being. And coherence of the object is matched by coherence of the subject.

But coherence of the object goes by the board in late capitalism. It is not my province at this point to explore how this works itself out at all levels of the totality — in the eclipse of reason and the rise of totalizing mass culture under the sway of the sign and logic of the commodity form itself. For our purposes we need only bear in mind that the outcome and integral of the process is the hegemony of the commodity form in late capitalist culture, manifest as disembodied and abstract exchange, and omnipresent as the infinitely transmutable image broadcast by the media. In sum, a non-human *other* has emerged as the dominant cultural form in late capitalist culture, to replace the human personages, which from Pharoanic Egypt onward had been the cementing forces of societal narcissism. Now the human representations are themselves palpably stooges for the infinite fluid that is the commodity itself; and it is the commodity — to be more exact, those that realize it — that is the real master of society.

Our concern, however, is with the actual human bonds that constitute the individual and which could, if cohesive enough, shield him from the penetration of this social *other*. And the point of particular concern is that juncture at which the bastion that had been the bourgeois family is itself fractured and entered, leaving the human objects, too, in a state of disarray.

We do not want to elude a complex historical reality. Except as a piece of bourgeois ideology, there was never an isolated family that sealed itself hermetically against the world. And although this ideology has served to perpetuate the public-private split that is an essential part of the bourgeois heritage, it should not be confused with a real historical accounting. In actual history, the isolated, pure family has been only a phantasm in the minds of people who yearn for consolation against the rigors of society and the indifference of nature. The real family has always existed as a nexus of influences within the whole, a nexus between the individual and the social totality. Families are regions of increased social density within this totality, stabilized by the pinions of transhistorical human need and the exigencies of socialization. As history lurches along, the configuration of these pinions

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changes; different languages become bound to the family nexus and different material and juridical relations arise between it and other nexuses within the totality. It is the sense of such a differentiation that we have in mind when we talk of the penetration of the nuclear bourgeois family.

Penetration by what? By the state, of course. Lasch, and more recently, Jacques Donzelot,[13] have described the process in some detail. The nuclear family, handed the task of socialization in a world whose public relations are dominated by an abstract and inhuman mode of production, is as self-contradictory a formation as ever to step forward onto the historical stage. The contradiction is glaring: more and more socialization must be carried out by fewer and fewer people, people, moreover whose autonomous strength to provide such is constantly being sapped. The result: an inevitable breakdown, manifest as the intolerable efflorescence of those behaviors which the dominant order considers marginal — the perverse, the promiscuous, the addictive, the criminal, the ineducable, the neurotic and the outright mad. Worse, when the family fulfills its function properly it is just as likely to produce individuals who are too strong — i.e., who may rebel, either through deviant pathways or, of deepest concern to power, collective revolutionary action. In any case the bourgeois order cannot dream of leaving the family alone. Whether it makes people who are too weak or too strong, it must be, and indeed has been, colonized and pacified.

The visible edge of the process has been, as Donzelot has described, the state's concern with delinquent, uneducable and unsocializable children. But the development of central interest is less the discipline of the marginal than the emergence of forms suitable for a thoroughgoing colonization of the entire institution. This discourse includes psychoanalysis itself — not so much as Freud enunciated it but as it became integrated into the burgeoning health industries. And it is ultimately those industries themselves, along with their ancillae in the fields of psychology, social work and counselling, which have become the colonial administrators for the capitalist state in its encounter with the family.[14]

The phase of monopoly capital has been the decisive moment for the breaching of the boureois family. For here a number of trajectories have converged, the total of which adds up to a qualitatively distinct imperative from what had gone before: 1) We must note the emergence of a massified state apparatus, essential to iron out the endless crises of the capitalist economy. Once instituted on economic grounds, the tendency of such an apparatus is to assume hegemony over the whole of society. 2) The rise of the medical establishment becomes an especially critical part of that state apparatus — economically gluttonous yet essential for legitimation. 3) The commodification of erstwhile domestic preserves, such as the production of leisure and popular culture, becomes a vital feature of the economy and the legitimation process alike. 4) The increase of productivity and the endemic generation of surpluses introduce an age of consumerism which cannot but tear families asunder. For in one motion children cease to be producers and become consumers. This places them at automatic odds with the older generation, and also places alongside that older generation an essentially alien power of socialization — the inhuman force of the commodity itself, seeking to be realized in the human heart that must be induced to possess it.

We must add to the above another general feature of capitalist society which has

13. Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families* (New York, 1979).

14. Christopher Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World* (New York, 1977). Cf. also, Joel Kovel, "The American Mental Health Industry," in *Critical Psychiatry,* David Ingleby, editor (New York, 1980).

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been accentuated in its late phase: the relentless separation of work from domestic life. This would not matter so much if a real community existed to provide care and support function. However, as such a community itself lies victim to capital, it is generally the case that parental work is carried out at the expense of consistent parental contact. For a while this schism contributed to the well-documented "decline of the father." However with the increasingly necessary emergence of the two-paycheck family, the problem takes on a more general hue.

For all these reasons, and through concrete influences ranging from TV to schools and clinics themselves, the integrity of the parental object is violated in late capitalism and the ground is laid for the development of a pathological narcissism. The state enters by usurping the relations between individuals and by introducing alien intermediaries. This is epitomized by the configuration of a family that relates to itself only by sitting glued together in front of the television. Therefore, despite the depredations of work, the problem is not one of neglect, for the narcissistic individual is less the subject of abandonment than the victim of a kind of cloying attachment. What is missing, however, is the kind of articulated and socially coherent human surroundings necessary for the development of real individuals. Intensity of involvement persists, for this is, in the end, what the nuclear family dishes out best. But such intensity is delivered in one, or, more likely, a small series of essentially *dyadic* relationships: baby-mother; baby-father; small child to mother in a different phase, etc. These relationships are not themselves subject to the break-in of others as in the classic oedipal triangle, which, whatever its unsavory consequences, fulfilled the inestimable need of providing a coherent subjective differentiation and so permitted the development of real individuals. The differentiated parent is experienced in a multiplicity of subtle interrelationships. As a result, a rounded, full figure emerges, suitable for internalization as an integrated individual. By contrast, the late capitalist family in a setting in which intense dyadic relations with mother may be linearly succeeded by, rather than differentiated into, intense dyadic relations with father — for mother and father have not that much to do with each other, and what they have to do is broken into by some instrumentality of the state, whether this be the media or a social worker. There is, in the shorthand we have been developing, no *other* to the *other*: therefore that original *other*, the narcissistic influence of the primary object, remains omnipresent, as does primary narcissism with its omnipotence of thought. And from the parent's side, estrangement and the loss of social texture leads to narcissistic overinvestment in the child. The developing child cannot as a result mediate her-his grandiose self-system; she-he can only, as a result of the terror induced by ravening desires wall it off, whereby the grandiose self begins the process of quasi-independent development which eventuates in narcissistic character pathology.

It should be emphasized that I do not draw attention to the so-called narcissistic character disorders to tar us all with the brush of psychopathology. That would be a corrupt and pointless extension of the false ideology of health to a historical situation. It is absurd to claim we are all "sick" except in the context of a transcendent standard. Otherwise the benchmark is necessarily accommodation to a murderous and stunting social order. There is no escaping this dilemma within medical discourse. However it is useful to see how a historically significant segment of people are led to develop self-experience of a specific kind — a kind, moreover, that reproduces on subjective terrain the sense of alienation and estrangement which we recognize as the signature of capitalist relations.

In this respect the key feature is the de-sociation of the narcissistic character, for it

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is this quality, more than any other, that contributes to the reproduction of capitalist relations and so moves to close the circle of narcissistic families making narcissistic people who make a narcissistic society and live in narcissistic families that are products of that society. Bookchin[15] has pointed out the "asociality" of capitalist society, its loss of texture and regression to an increasingly hollowed-out, inorganic status in which the bureaucrat is constitutive of the social fabric. The de-sociation of the sick narcissist epitomizes the subjective moment of this development, one which is played out in a myriad of forms and across traditional social boundaries such as class. These are the people — not the shadowy sick extremes but the vast range who live in the sun of normalcy — who imbibe and reproduce the culture of narcissism, who buy well, tend the self and never dream of making trouble; or who, if they lack the means to buy, simply lapse into de-sociated self-containment. It would be a mistake to regard the phenomena in which they participate as the unmediated result of politico-economic manipulation. No, the savants of Madison Avenue are not wholly off the mark when they claim that they basically give people what they want. For those wants have been instilled, and at a deeper level than mere conscious manipulation: they are laid down in a primitive experience that produces an inflated, weak, easily manipulatable self-system, ever at the ready to attach itself to the non-human *others* devised out of the commodity form. In this way we may epitomize the narcissism we have been chronicling as nothing but the subjective reflex of late capitalism itself.

It would also be a mistake to think that this situation can be remedied by pressing into service the obsolete nuclear family. For in the first place, such a family was never very much of a bastion to begin with, having been palpably associated with all that has been miserable and thankless in the bourgeois character. And in the second place, it grew the way it did, and retained its character, because of the concrete form of domination without which it would not have an identity to fall back upon— patriarchy. Here we must remember if we are to be historical, that narcissism, like capital itself, is embedded in a dialectic, and that it has a side of resistance as well, a resistance that is articulated precisely against the weight of patriarchal domination. The resistance of narcissism is embodied in the myth of Narcissus evoked by Marcuse. In the capitalist world it surfaces as a rebellion of the body against its deformation into a machine. And it takes other forms as well, depending upon concrete circumstances. It is this resistance of narcissism, for example, which contributes to the emancipatory force of the gay movement and accounts for the legitimate hostility with which gay people (and feminists as well) have countered the politics which assumes that the foremost way out of the de-sociation of the narcissistic society is through a resuscitation of the nuclear family, with the unspoken but real insinuation that its inevitable sidekick, patriarchy, is to follow.

This should not be construed either, however, as a call to continue the smashing of what that family promised in its emancipatory moment, namely, secure and coherent intimate human relations. I think these have been established as a transhistorical human need — i.e., a necessary condition for the development of real human power, as against infantile omnipotence. We understand as well that sufficient conditions for the growth of that power include the provision of an authentically socialist society — a society within which the antique form of the nuclear-

15. Murray Bookchin, "Beyond New-Marxism," in *Telos*, no. 36, pp. 5-29. (*The Mill on the Floss*, by George Eliot, is available in Penguin editions, Harmondsworth, 1979.)

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patriarchal family will be relegated to museums. We need not only the material relations of that society to allow real individuality to develop: we need the maintenance of its transcendent promise as well. Our task, in the present state of crisis and opportunity, is to develop an adequate intermediary, and it is a challenge worth assuming.

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THE SELF: REBORN, UNDONE, TRANSFORMED

by Jean Bethke Elshtain

Lasch sees narcissism as psychopathology, the "chief complaint" of those undergoing psychiatric treatment and, more broadly, as an identity that involves living for the moment and repudiating one's own past. The narcissist engages in a restless search for instantaneous intimacy, titillation, and sensation, and seeks to avoid, or is incapable of, long-term relations. Narcissistic society is characterized by increases in lawlessness, violence and capricious behavior, by obsessions with celebrity, a repudiation of skill, intelligence, form, and critical thought, the erosion of standards of public education, the fall of traditional religion and the rise of the occult and cults, the degradation of work, the disintegration of family life, political passivity and quietism, and the loss of that inner discipline required for genuine public commitment. Painting with broad strokes, Lasch indicts the age and those within it as having botched things badly.

Others have spoken of the same crisis. Sennett draws on much of the same evidence as Lasch. He, too, sees the erosion of public life, the intrusion of a "peculiar standard of market exchange in intimate relations,"[1] the closure of meaningful social encounters, the break-up of those codes of behavior that make up a social role,[2] the emergence of what he calls "destructive gemeinschaft," the experience of being compelled to disclose one's feelings to others in order to be "authentic," a process that deprives the self of capacities for play and imagination as all of social life is over-personalized and externalized. Narcissism is mobilized in social relations by removing all barriers between persons, eradicating all mediating institutions, so that finally structures of domination in society, transposed into psychological terms, come to mirror the world and one's experience of the world becomes little more than a mirror of the self.[3] The entire social world comes to resemble a pseudo-intimate familism: intrusive, all-encompassing, and finally destructive of inner possibilities for public action.

Finally, Habermas' work parallels Lasch's in some important ways, though Habermas carefully avoids psychological language. Although Lasch finds the catalyst for "new forms of personality" in changes in social organization — the trajectory of his analysis is from the psychic end of personal-social identity out into the social world.[4] With Habermas the burden of analysis shifts. He also locates the crisis of contemporary capitalist society in the socio-cultural arena: the crisis of legitimation is a breakdown of "system integration" so great that it poses a threat to "social integration." System integration is menaced by an accumulative process that forges contradictions within the economic, political and socio-cultural system. Deploying

1. Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York, 1977), pp. 6-7.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 336. See also Sennett's article, "Destructive Gemeinschaft" in Norman Birnbaum, editor, *Beyond the Crisis* (New York, 1977), pp. 6-7.
4. "Narcissism provides us not with a ready-made psychological determinism but with a way of understanding the psychological impact of recent social changes." Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism. American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York, 1979), p. 101.

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structural-functionalist language, Habermas traces that confluence of forces that leads to a "motivation" crisis parallel with, and an integral feature of, an overall legitimation crisis. Habermas' motivation crisis echoes Lasch's account of the rise of narcissistic culture. He finds a decline in the work ethic, a draining of social institutions, including family, educational systems, and the state of their normative significance, a weakening of ties of the individual to others through shared participation in social institutions, an increase in privatism and depoliticization, an increasingly problematic identity-formation process, and a growing sense of threat to all social institutions.

Although like Lasch, Habermas also traces a process of thoroughgoing decline and disintegration, both insist that they have not written off Western civilization. Habermas puts the question: "Are we dealing with reactions, uncontrollable in the long run, against the continued violation of normative structures that are at odds with the growing steering needs of the political economic system? Or are we dealing with the birth pangs of a fundamentally new mode of socialization?"[5] That is the crucial question.

The most potent and widespread version of the solution to "private virtue" is the new spiritualism sweeping America. To be "born again" is to acquire an all-inclusive self, an identity both public and private which carries with it a presumption of virtue and private salvation. Every activity undertaken by the born again is suffused with a divine aura. For tens of thousands of Americans, an all-encompassing identity has been found in privatized salvation.[6] According to Marty, a sympathetic observer, the religiosity of the present "eventuates not in congregations but in clienteles, not in deep community but in casual association and eventually in personal isolation. The new religiosity appeals to the marketplace of consumers, to the enterprise of do-it-yourselfers, to the eclectic impulse to fashion an 'I'll do it my way' combination of spiritual elements."[7] Surely, Lasch is correct to see in strident and superficial manifestations of the new religiosity symptoms of the narcissistic culture.

Similarly, the fluid, open-ended self of humanistic psychology seeks private virtue and retreats from the world under the guise of "opening oneself up" to it. For the fluid, "self-actualizing" self any old social locus is fine, for freedom lies within, in a "feeling," rather than within complicated personal-political ties and social arrangements. Celebrants of this so-called humanistic version of the self in fact embrace a narcissistic symptom — the inability to form secure, long-lasting relations — as salvation. The new person is promised, and promises, an escape from politics, indeed from all public institutions, hierarchies, law, finally from history itself. Society is but a fiction; the past an illusion, "social structures and forms are meaningless and unnecessary."[8] The basic idea is to create a self that has a "feel" for things and need

5. Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston, 1973), p. 129.

6. The rush into a solution from private virtue to the crisis of the self implicates fully one-third of all adult Americans and teenagers according to both NBC and Gallup polls. Some 71% of those saved claim that they, in turn, have personally "tried to encourage someone to accept Jesus Christ." The weight of all this evidence — and more — prompts George Gallup himself to state that the United States may well be in "an early stage of a profound religious revival." Cf. "Religious Revival Forecast by Gallup," *New York Times*, June 20, 1977, p. 30

7. Martin E. Marty, "In Every Way Religious," in *Social Research*, vol. 46, no. 3 (Autumn, 1979), pp. 594-595. Cf. Joseph H. Fichter, "The Trend to Spiritual Narcissism," in *Commonweal* (March 17, 1978), pp. 169-173.

8. Edwin Schur, *The Awareness Trap. Self Absorption Instead of Social Change* (New York, 1977), pp. 2-3. Cf. Aaron Stern, *The Narcissistic American* (New York, 1979).

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not think them through. One is liberated from everything but an obsessive focus on the self. Says Carl Rogers of his "New Man": he will be one who "recognizes that he will be living his transient life mostly in temporary relationships and that he must be able to establish closeness quickly. He must be able to leave those close relationships behind, without excessive conflict or mourning": the built-in obsolescence of social relations.[9]

This boundary-less self shares with the born-again evangelical a repudiation of the past, a hatred of complex thought or traditional institutions, a fetish for the "real," and a credulity as to the things of this world, including the realities of political and economic power, that is truly childish: a form of magical thinking. Indeed, these newfound identities demand as the price of membership "the sacrifice of autonomous thinking."[10] The deadliest manifestation of this short-circuiting of individuality and moral autonomy appears in the cult phenomenon. As one of the doomed members of the People's Temple put it: "Well, after starting off on the wrong foot I was fortunate enough to get an education in getting along with others who also like myself were not perfect. Now I know I'm like a banana, just one of the bunch."[11]

One manifestation of what might be termed narcissistic rage — hatred and anger of the Other, of anyone who "stands in one's way" — is ignored by Lasch, perhaps because exponents of this notion of the self have long been identified as radical critics of contemporary society. Yet, in Sartre's existentialism one finds a repetition and strengthening of some of the most regressive dimensions of the concept of abstract individualism which emerged with the triumph of liberal social contract theory in Western thought. In other words, Sartre remains stuck on the level of predatory civil society. He sees human life as "violence on violence,"[12] a system of "violence and terror." Sartre presents an atomistic conception of the grandiose self: the person is an isolated monad confronting an external social world set off against, and in opposition to, his "free project."

Sartre's vision of the existentialist self reads as a parody of self-made man — a being with no ties to bind him to the past and no commitments to hold him down in the present. Dependence on others is a "loss of freedom" and Sartre lives in a world "haunted" by his fellow men. To live in such a world "is not only to be able to encounter the Other at every turn of the road; it is also to find myself engaged in a world in which instrumental complexes can have a meaning which my free project has not first given to them."[13] Others are what stand in my way. Sennett points out that one symptom of the process of narcissism at work in an ideology of liberation is the characterization of diverse "others" as forces seeking to wipe one out: it's either them or me.[14]

In Sartre's world one must struggle incessantly against those who would disallow one total freedom to act. All activity, including knowledge and play, is a mode of

9. John N. Kotred, "Religion, Psychology and the Sterile Self," *Commonweal* (May 12, 1978), p. 297.

10. Theodore W. Adorno, "Resignation," in *Telos*, no. 35 (Spring, 1978), p. 168.

11. Carey Winfrey, "Letters to 'Dad': Portrait of Cult's Faith and Fear," *New York Times* (Dec. 29. 1979), p. 14.

12. R.D. Laing-David Cooper, *Reason and Violence* (a translation and precis of *La Critique de la Raison Dialectique* which Sartre blessed) (New York, 1961), p. 165.

13. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, translated by Hazel Barnes (New York, 1956), p. 485.

14. Sennett, "Destructive Gemeinschaft," *op.cit.*, p. 183.

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appropriation. Sartre describes skiing, for example, as the *possession* of a visual field and the *conquest* of space. The link to abstract individualism as possessive individualism is clear. Rather than countering the destructive intrusion of language of market and exchange into all spheres of life, Sartre extends it. As a result, his world, like the narcissistic world detailed by Lasch, leaves us shrunken and impoverished.

The last example of cultural narcissism is an instance of pseudo-politics. This pseudo-politics involves viewing the world as a mirror reflection of one's own personality. In Sennett's words: "When the principle of immanent personality is extended to such an extreme that all appearances in society come to matter only as manifestations of personality...we are talking about narcissism mobilized as a cultural condition, as a code of meaning...." The public world, here again a regressive civil society, exists to "fulfill the self: there are no 'human objects' or object relations with a reality to call their own."[15] Such narcissistic mobilization and displaced politics is, alas, sometimes at work in ideologies of liberation. Thus, there are radical feminist thinkers who politicize all "natural" categories and naturalize political ones as they couch arguments from ontology. All of human culture and history is traced backward (by Firestone and Atkinson, among others) and viewed as the direct, unmediated outgrowth of the sex distinction as such. Women's oppression is lodged in her biology: Firestone calls this biological tyranny. The "dualism" from which all oppression springs lies in nature, "in the sexual division itself." Natural, cultural, social and political categories exist in an undifferentiated heap.

The most important dictum of radical feminist thinkers is their refusal to distinguish between the personal and the political, between self and society. That some connection or mutually interactive influence exists between these spheres to different ends and purposes is not at issue here, but the forging of an identity of spheres is. Radical feminists depict a social world of stark lovelessness wherein pervasive force, coercion, manipulation and crude power roam undifferentiatedly over the landscape, suffusing society unto its innermost parts. Given their identity or collapse of the personal and political, biological and social, radical feminist scenarios for political change can offer only total salvation as their goal. Nothing is exempt from the destructive gemeinschaft to be ushered in by a feminist revolution. Firestone conjures up the cybernetrician as modern savior. In the future, once test-tube babies have replaced biological reproduction (pregnancy having been declared barbaric), every aspect of life will rest in the beneficent hands of a "new elite of engineers, cybernetricians."[16] Those who become queasy at the thought — at this nihilistic obliteration of any genuine possibility for either private virtue or public ethics — are exhorted to fear not, for a feminist "cultural revolution" will guarantee that the new cybernetic elite gears all its technocratic wizardries and totalistic control only toward good and benevolent ends. In this grim narcissistic utopia, politics, the family, any locus for authentic human social relations will have disappeared, and history will have come to an end.

J.P. Stern, in his study of the language of German fascism, warns that whenever moves are afoot to erode distinctions between public and private, personal and political, whenever reason and dispassionate scholarship are downgraded or declared irrelevant, whenever proof of one's "authenticity" takes precedence over one's actions, the result is an impoverishment of public and private life and finally, their

15. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
16. Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex* (New York, 1972), p. 201.

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devastation.[17] The forces at work within society to those ends Lasch calls narcissistic.

Doris Lessing once remarked that today it is difficult to distinguish the marvelous from the terrible. It is equally difficult to evaluate signs of chaos, breakdown and disorder and to differentiate these from the sort of confusion that may signal renewal and the creation or emergence of new social forms. What for one observer might embody an unmistakable symptom of cultural disintegration, for another may serve as a birthpang attendant upon reconstructive and reflective commitment. Lasch has been criticized for painting a picture so devastatingly thorough in its indictment of the present that no way can be found to do anything other than wait for the end. Lasch denies this charge. In a reply to his critics he urges that the "solution to our social problems lies in a completion of the democratic movement inaugurated in the eighteenth century, not in a retreat to a pre-democratic way of life. Socialism, notwithstanding the horrors committed in name, still represents the legitimate heir of liberal democracy."[18] If narcissism is the problem, socialism is the cure. But how convincing is this medicine within the context of Lasch's overall argument?

With reference to the contemporary crisis, Lasch observes: "It may signify, in other words, not a retreat from politics at all but the beginnings of a general political revolt."[19] Discussing the distrust of Americans toward their social institutions, Lasch suggests that "this same distrust may furnish the basis of a new capacity for self-government, which would end by doing away with the need that gives rise to a governing class in the first place."[20] Early on in the volume Lasch draws upon the "vital psychoanalytic insight" that "loving memories" constitute a reservoir upon which the adult individual can draw as a source of strength and renewal.[21] Toward the book's conclusion these possibilities are proffered: "It does not seem unreasonable to believe, even in the political passivity and quietism of the 1970s, that a thoroughgoing transformation of our social arrangements remains a possibility, and that a socialist revolution would abolish the new paternalism — the dependence of the ordinary citizen on experts, the degradation of both work and domestic life — from which so much of the antagonism between men and women now derives. The establishment of duality between the sexes, the transformation of the family, and the development of new structures of personality would by no means usher in the androgynous utopia, but neither would it leave the battle of the sexes essentially unchanged."[22] Finally, citizens are urged to "take the solution of their problems into their own hands" and to create their own "communities of competence." This they can do, Lasch contends, because the "moral discipline formerly associated with the work ethic still remains a value independent of the role it once played in the defense of property rights. That discipline — indispensable to the task of building a new order — endures, most of all in those who knew the old order only as a broken promise, yet took the promise more seriously than those who merely took it for granted."[23]

17. J.P. Stern, *Hitler. The Führer and the People* (Berkeley), p. 97.
18. Christopher Lasch, "Politics and Social Theory: A Reply to the Critics," *Salmagundi*, no. 46 (Fall, 1979), p. 197.
19. Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism, op.cit.*, p. 21.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 20. This latter is an extraordinary claim for Lasch suggests that social change could be so thorough it would give birth to a "new man" and actually transform needs. Unfortunately, he does not amplify his argument so we are left wondering how to distinguish Lasch's "society gives birth to new man" model from that crude one he finds in orthodox Marxism.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 349.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 397.

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Lasch's call for a socialist revolution is not convincing. First, because Lasch has not shown those imminent possibilities internal to his discussion of the present that might give birth to such a future; thus the call to total transformation and socialist revolution seems extraordinarily underspecified and underargued. Second, a socialist revolution is simply not in the cards for the foreseeable future. The possibilities for reconstructive change, American style, must include, as state socialist systems do not, an activation and strengthening of a participatory principle and the substantive concept of a democratic citizen that so impressed De Tocqueville. Lasch argues that "a 'conservative' respect for order and authority has now become an essential ingredient of any radical movement that seeks to transcend the progressive and socialist pieties of an earlier time.... Meanwhile the left has turned its back on its proper constituency — the people who cling to family life, religion, the work ethic, and other ostensibly outmoded values as the only source of stability in an otherwise precarious existence. *The left has chosen the wrong side in the cultural warfare between 'middle America' and the educated or half-educated classes....* Lewis Mumford once regretted that 'patriotism should be monopolized by reactionaries.' The same thing applies to other 'bourgeois' virtues. *But the American left, in its unexamined commitment to positions it believes to be 'anti-authoritarian,' has repeatedly forced the legitimate need for authority, stability and continuity to find reactionary political outlets."*[24] Lasch thus finds moral discipline indispensable to social change and political struggle. If so, what traditional social forms retain a capacity for creating and cultivating such discipline? The occultish and cultish dimensions of the new religiosity are abundantly in evidence. But that is not the whole picture. The religious revival might as well animate and give new vitality to more traditional, rule-governed and community-oriented churches which, ironically, may be the most effective force against spiritualist subjectivism and narcissism. Among the chief reasons cited by many who have returned to the "traditional" fold is their desire to serve others, not simply to save their own souls. Following the teachings in spirit of the martyred Lutheran pastor, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, social Christians push to move the Church into the streets, the ghettos, and all other places where "god's children" suffer. It shows remarkable ill will for social critics on the left to trivialize this endeavor.

There is, within Christianity, a social gospel that can be recalled and whose significance can be rediscovered, in part through the actual experience of political engagement itself.[25] As one Christian social critic resoundingly put it: "Nothing less than profound social and political reforms, nothing less than an economic revolution, nothing less than than new international structures will change the lot of all these victims and deliver them from the anguish of the new day...to love our fellow men means to engage in politics. To remain indifferent to politics, as do so many Christians even today, to repudiate this 'social gospel' is to deny the Lord of the poor."[26] Even as traditional modes of Christianity linked with an ongoing community of believers and located historically can activate service and political struggle, Christian moral notions set limits to political action. In a time of excess, given the dangers of nihilism and rage unfolded by Lasch, to articulate and to defend a philosophy and politics of limits is essentially to prevent a descent into barbarism. Moreover, the articulation of limits serves as one constituent feature of that

24. Lasch, "Reply to Critics," *op.cit.*, p. 199 (emphasis added).
25. Philippe Maury, *Politics and Evangelism* (Garden City, 1959), p. 57.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

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moral discipline Lasch calls for and Christian social commitment demands.

It is important to note that for some observers of the American scene, an "exploration of extremes" is part of our national character and constitutes "a kind of radical heroism." Writes George Kateb: "The American characteristically seeks to experiment with himself and with natural reality, and thus touches the polar extremes of savagery and self-consciousness, rapacity and etheralization. Loneliness inevitably fills the adventurous self." Kateb concludes: "The American self is a loose-fitting self. Americans are characteristically unformed, restless, self-doubting and constantly putting on some new aspect only to discard it as unfitting."[27] Two decades ago Norman Mailer, advertising for himself, probed the character of the "hipster," insisting that the hipster was a man who must encourage the "psychopath" in himself, must be unwilling to express "only a small portion" of himself.[28] The American self, it seems, is a self in search of a *form*. The dynamic whereby an amoeba-like self, oozing indiscriminately and formlessly outward, rather than the radically heroic self, experimenting playfully from the deep seriousness of purpose, has become the more likely end result of America's "loose-fitting" self-identity can best be characterized as a *disintegration of form*.[29] Kateb's hero and Mailer's hipster are both individuals with a sense of past and present, both capable of experiencing intensely and of nourishing values in a time of crisis. They actively create a form, a self-identity, out of "accelerated historical tempos and deteriorated values...."[30] The point about Lasch's narcissistic self, on the other hand, is the sterility and emptiness of that self, really no "self" at all, in Lasch's view, but a series of reactions, sensations, obsolete the moment they gain temporary expression.

To recover and rediscover the concept of form means, first, to *relocate the self* in the web of history and the tissue of social life. Form *is* identity. The self, like any recognizable object, requires a form and "losing form is equivalent to losing identity."[31]

To consider how it is the individuals might locate themselves within boundaries that are not so much constraints but, rather, the enabling dimensions of self-identity, it is necessary to turn to a dimension of social life Lasch finds nearly gone as a locus for identity formation: the family.

Lasch's discussion of authority and authoritarianism within the frame of the family fails to take into account the potentially liberatory dimensions that continue to lie within the familial form, not excluding some aspects of traditional definitions of femininity. In his discussion of the world we have irrevocably lost, Lasch implies that the old paternalism, harsh sexual repression, and a somewhat obsessive work ethic lay at the basis of the creation of an inner-directed, individuated self. By over-assimilating autonomy and individualism, authority and authoritarianism, Lasch comes to the unhappy conclusion that (1) the evils of the traditional family form and the good necessarily go together; (2) in the absence of *authoritarian* controls, self reliance and moral autonomy never develop or are hopelessly sapped. Thus, today's permissiveness lays the psychological basis for a new and presumably all the more deadly form of authoritarianism, because inner-directed, morally autonomous individuals who might challenge moves to such an order are fewer and further

27. George Kateb, "On the 'Legitimation Crisis'," *Social Research*, vol. 46, no. 4 (Winter, 1979), p. 724.
28. Norman Mailer, *Advertisements for Myself* (New York, 1959), p. 345.
29. Erich Kahler, *The Disintegration of Form in the Arts* (New York, 1967), p. 21.
30. Mailer, *Advertisements for Myself, op.cit.*, p. 345.
31. Kahler, *The Disintegration of Form in the Arts, op.cit.*, p. 21.

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between.

Lasch's tendency to collapse authoritarianism and authority, moral autonomy and hyperindividualism ignores the critical distance between these notions and the concrete pictures of human reality they entail. It is not the case that once one locates social authority one is on a slippery slope to authoritarianism, or that the inexorable result of the individuation process, the creation of a bounded self-identity, is "rugged individualism" with all its baneful effects. Lasch has incorrectly identified "the isolated individualism of the earlier bourgeois character type with the concepts of individuation and moral autonomy."[32]

Lasch develops something of a Catch-22: to embrace the forces at work in the present eroding parental, particularly *paternal* authority, can be seen as part of a potentially liberating breakdown of modes of inherited authoritarianism; however, this is, as it turns out, not so much liberating as simply capitulating to the other-directed, narcissistic side of the coin. If one reasserts at least some dimensions of traditional parental authority, one is surely on a ellide into authoritarianism and probably guilty of nostalgically seeking a return to a bygone era. The way Lasch sets up the choices is problematic. It is not the case that authority-authoritarianism are at either end of a single scale: there is a qualitative difference between these notions and realities, just as a gulf separates moral autonomy, properly understood, from rapacious individualism.

Lasch's thesis requires more and further evidence. Most of the time families, for better or for worse, remain the locus of the most powerful, ambivalent, and meaningful emotional ties. The family may be Lasch's desiccated husk but thus far it has stubbornly refused to blow away, despite the chill winds of apocalyptic social criticism and abominable public policies. Finally, if Lasch is serious about the manner in which the Left has gone wrong in its unthinking embrace of "liberationist" movements, and if he is correct that we must not let the forces of reaction take over concerns with family, tradition, order and law, then we must find some way to affirm the family and to seek out its potentially liberatory dimension. We must reappropriate the concept of authority within social critique and political struggle and make of it a requirement for *any* form of social life.

A second requirement is the recognition that inner controls, the emergence of conscience and a formed self-identity, can be built up *only* on the basis of highly intense, direct, personal relations: not through any form of institutionalized or "cooled-out" or hip-communal child-rearing. The key moving term here is *identification* for the capacity to identify is one hallmark of a rich inner self as well as a constituent feature of that self. Lasch seems to believe that to have identification, the internalization of idealized objects, there must also be fear (as well as, one hopes, love and respect). He suggests that identification cannot proceed without fear.[33] By overstressing the punitive dimensions of parent-child, particularly father-child relations, Lasch raises problems about the process of identification itself: if the child must be terrorized to become inner-directed, do we really want it?

Lasch is off base in this contention. There is evidence to suggest that identifications formed primarily or exclusively out of fear are destructive of the creation of a secure self-identity based on trust. Of course, parents who preach "do your own thing" to children as they practice it themselves are not the alternative:

32. Emil Oesteriecher, "The Privatization of the Self in Modern Society," *Social Research*, vol. 46, no. 3 (Autumn, 1979), p. 600.

33. Bruno Betelheim, *The Informed Heart* (New York, 1971), p. 98.

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this is the contrast model Lasch proposes. The old, terrifying father is pitted against the new absent father-pal; the old, highly cathected mother, and the new, narcissistic, distant, self-absorbed mother. These contrast models are inadequate. One of the signs of hope today is the attempt by men and women to form and sustain strong family ties, to reassert their primacy in the rearing of their children, to catalyze identification on the basis of love and respect, authority and reasonable discipline rather than unthought-out, irrational, and primal fear and terror. Because Lasch also mentions as one potential source for renewal "early loving memories," it seems imperative that such memories get created. This will not happen if the child grows up in an arena in which terror is the moving force. If, however, love and respect are the seedbed of earliest mnemonic residues, these memories may well serve as the spring from which critiques of less-than-loving social arrangements can begin.

Consider the following examples: Bluebond-Langner spent months with dying children, their families, doctors, nurses, teachers, friends. She learned an extraordinary thing about these children that points to a powerful, internalized capacity for *play* and *action*, sure signs of the existence of a complex, formed self-identity. She draws the following conclusions about her dying children: (1) They are willful, purposeful beings who possess selves; (2) they interpret their behavior and act on the basis of their interpretation; (3) they interpret their own self-images; (4) they interpret the behavior of others to obtain a view of themselves, others, and objects; (5) they are capable of initiating behavior so as to affect the behavior of others toward them; (6) any meaning that children attach to themselves, others and objects carries with respect to the physical, social, and temporal setting in which they find themselves; (7) children can move from one social world to another and act appropriately in each.[34] This is rich evidence of inner-directed identity — precisely the sort Lasch no longer finds being created. How did Bluebond-Langner's subjects get that way? The story is extraordinary in its ordinariness: simply by being reared in families, by fallible but loving parents.

Another example is the potentially liberatory "moment" within these traditional definitions of femininity that have been systematically devalued by men and under assault by feminists. The terms for female participation as "equals" in today's political economy and debased civil society revolve around utilitarian calculations of individual thought and human worth: the self-interested self as an ideal. For women to opt wholeheartedly for this arena means they must forsake their historical legacy in a private space of household and family, a space that gave birth to its own values, imperatives, and modes of identity. Sara Ruddick puts the question this way: do women, who claim the instruments of public power in the present, have cultures, traditions and inquiries that they should insist on bringing to the public world? If the answer is yes, the problem remains: how do women bring forward a specifically female identity and the values to which it has been traditionally tied in a way that is not regressive or reactionary? Ruddick has suggested feminists might focus on and amplify, rather than deny and downgrade, "maternal thinking," a mode of thought and way of being tied to the preservation of life, keeping over acquiring, conserving the fragile over conquering the weak. The practices associated with child-rearing, for example, give rise to values of flexibility, humility (as anti-hubris), good humor.

On a different level, Lasch and Sennett both express dismay at the decline of play

34. Myra Bluebond-Langner, *The Private Worlds of Dying Children* (Princeton, 1978), pp. 213-214.

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and the degradation of sport. For Sennett the self is robbed increasingly of "the powers of play," powers that require "a milieu at a distance from the self for their realization." The creation of destructive gemeinschaft or, for Lasch, of narcissistic social relations makes "of the individual an actor deprived of an art."[35] Argues Sennett: "To the extent...that a society mobilizes narcissism, it gives reign to a principle of expression entirely contrary to the expressive principle of play."[36] Why is this so?

The answer to this riddle lies in the recognition that to play and to play-act are forms of human activity that are based, first, on certain imagined, envisaged realities. Play must also be somewhat disinterested. Although it may begin within the self it must, in Sennett's characterization, involve some measure of liberation *from* the self. Play or play-acting, including inhabiting social roles conceived not as thin and constricting straitjackets but as rich systems of interrelated belief and action, turns on an inner capacity for imagination, the inability to move from envisagement to activity, and an available field for action.

Fantasy in itself represents, at least initially, a turning away and a turning inward. It may end there, regressively, but "it can also be a preparation for reality; it may fulfill a synthetic function by provisionally connecting our needs and goals with possible ways of realizing them."[37] Fantasy permits the enactment and development of reality orienting processes. The peril of fantasy is a retreat into self-absorbed solipsism; the possibility of fantasy is to tap inner, creative responses that one can then "act out," as it were, and impose upon reality. The key in the transition from inner fantasy to outer play or "playing out" is the revelation of the self in and through action. If play is as important as Lasch, Sennett and psychoanalytic social thinkers say it is, one task of the critical imagination in our time must be to address how and in what ways worthy fields for endeavor have become constricted and how and in what ways this situation can be altered. This is particularly crucial in childhood, for if a child as a child fails to learn how to connect fantasy and reality, to play and play-act as a rehearsal for growing up, that lesson will be lost altogether and we are more likely in the future to get the empty, hollow selves Lasch depicts in greater numbers.

There is one other arena in which possibilities must be kept alive, and that is in the creation of what Plato called the "ideal city in speech." The ethical polity, a worthy field for human public endeavor, can be sustained only by persons who are committed to the twin values and worths of private virtue and public ethics. But what happens (and this is by no means merely a hypothetical problem — it is our contemporary dilemma) to these public and private commitments in the absence of an ethical polity that might serve as the moral touchstone and focus of citizen allegiance? Rousseau states the problem thus: "In order for a people still a-borning to cherish sound principles of politics, and consistently follow the basic rules deriving from reason of state, effect would need to be capable of becoming cause, and the social spirit that the laws are to produce would need to preside over their giving."[38] If we determine that our social order is corrupt and corrupting what shall serve as the basis for moral action? Where does one discover principles to live and act by?

35. Sennett, *Fall of Public Man, op.cit.*, p. 264.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 336.
37. Douglas Holmes, "A Contribution to a Psychoanalytic Theory of Work," *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child,* vol. XX (New York, 1965), pp. 386-387.
38. Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Social Contract and the Discourses* (New York, 1950), p. 61.

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How does one nurture the ideal of the "citizen" which lies beyond one's reach? Can a wellspring for change be forged or sustained within private spheres existing, as it were, as enclaves in which respect for persons, autonomy, decency, diversity and caring are kept shakily alive despite their being surrounded by an impoverished public world?

Rousseau clearly believed that the ends for moral action did not inhere in the extant social institutions of his time, nor were these ends implicit in contemporary forms of social life. Here Rousseau surely overstates his case. In our own time the nexus of social relationships that retain the possibility for affection, tenderness, responsibility, moral duty, obligation and caring are, for the most part, those we call or know as "private," relationships under the sustained pressure Lasch documents to succumb to the litigious and instrumentalist presumptions of our debased civil society. But the possibility remains and the centrality of that possibility cannot be overstressed for without a certain set of early experiences — experiences that provide for multiple, enriching human identifications — persons will have only thin, contingent connections to others and will be more likely to succumb to the temptation or demand for destructiveness, pity, and contempt. The private sphere, then, can (there is no guarantee) serve as the template upon which powerful political sentiments are raised.

The vision of a better life draws upon an extant way of life. A vision or fantasy of a better world, an ethical polity, need not involve visions of the utter destruction of the old, nor become stuck in unchecked interiority, but that what starts out as a kind of inner dialogue may become transformed through contemplation and action, as reasons become causes, into public speech and principles. This is part of what Rousseau was about in *The Social Contract* and that the mistake is to think of locating or finding ends in precise plans or tracts or thoroughly worked-out scenarios. We may think of the work of the political imagination as a species of fantasy of a particular sort, tapping moral and aesthetic impulses, public and private identities: a dynamic concatenation of individual psychic states, wishes, fears, desires, reasonings, which, transformed into visions, may manifest themselves on the social level. Once this complex process has been worked through, the states of mind cease to be merely or simply individual and become something else and more.

Everyone has the responsibility to make judgments between competing visions of the political imagination, rejecting those which tap primitive rage from those which have as their nourishing template our earliest mnenonic traces of needs met and succor provided within a context that was a secure universe. Only in this way can fantasies of hope be kept alive — fantasies which the more clamorous images of the narcissistically rageful would expunge from our world. The task of the imagination is possible only if civility is not utterly destroyed, only if a private sphere which allows for playful experimentation from deep seriousness of purpose exists free from totalistic intrusion and control. For even when justice is not realized and public ethics are a far-off ideal, freedom preserves that human communication necessary to realize both.

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NARCISSISM AFTER THE FALL: WHAT'S ON THE BOTTOM OF THE POOL?

by Paul Piccone

What is most interesting about Lasch's *Culture of Narcissism* is not so much the originality of his thesis, but the fact that it is *at this time* that such a thesis has begun to penetrate American consciousness. As Lasch himself points out, his account is not altogether new: it has illustrious precedents in Marx, Freud and the Frankfurt School.[1] Earlier versions of his thesis can already be found in those brilliant pages of *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, where Marx describes as the most debilitating features of alienation man's separation from species being and from other human beings[2] — typical traits of the narcissistic personality. Yet, although the loss of self, the reduction of living labor to the level of commodities bought and sold on the labor market, and the concomintant impoverishment of personality are processes that have long been associated with capitalist relations, they have never, up to recently, come to impede the smooth functioning and reproduction of these relations. The present crisis of the New Deal welfare state model of advanced capitalism is rendered particularly severe by the fact that, among other things, in its unrelenting efforts to generate a mass market of docile consumers and a homogenized labor force of disciplined producers, the system has come to create a type of individuality — the narcissistic personality — that fits all too well into the role ascribed to it: to the point of depriving the system of that negativity needed to replace the long-gone internal control mechanisms of entrepreneurial capitalism. This disruptive development, described by Habermas under the headings of rationality and motivation crisis,[3] not only has major structural consequences, but also results in the appropriation of Lasch's thesis by the very system that it seeks to criticize, as part of the ideological justification for both the austerity programs typical of periods of transition to new socio-economic models, as well as the new individuality and community reconstruction adequate to the coming phase of capitalist rationalization. This state of affairs precipitates that new debate Lasch calls for,[4] but which ultimately must head off in directions slightly different than those he envisions.

Marx's original theory of alienation moved along two main lines: the subjective-Hegelian and the objective-economistic one — both of which prefigured metaphysical and-or self-contradictory resolutions. The Hegelian side ended up theorizing the possibility of the reintegration of fragmented and alienated consciousness into the totality, thus overcoming the individual's rupture between himself and others (or species being) through dubious political agencies, such as Lukacs' subject-object identity or Gramsci's modern prince — perplexing philosophical and historical euphemisms for what have historically turned out to be poorly recycled versions of the Leninist party. Unfortunately, the projected reconciliations envisioned by all of these

1. Christopher Lasch, "Politics and Social Theory: A Reply to the Critics," in *Salmagundi*, no. 46 (Fall, 1979), p. 194.
2. Karl Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, translated by M. Milligan (New York, 1964), pp. 112-115.
3. Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, translated by T. McCarthy (Boston, 1973), pp. 61-68 and 75-92.
4. Lasch, "Politics and Social Theory," *op.cit.*, p. 202.

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formulations have hitherto found their political translation primarily through an oppressive and cumbersome bureaucratic apparatus that solves the problem only at the ideological level while in practice managing universal alienation with the help of the secret police and the vague promise of that very same consumerism — and ensuing secondary narcissism — that Lasch indicts as the typical expression of contemporary cultural decay. Independently of whether historical or otherwise contingent circumstances may have led to this totalitarian outcome[5] of "really existing socialism,"[6] any Hegelian reconciliation as the overcoming of alienation is *in principle* incompatible with all forms of meaningful individuality — whether of the "abstract" type of bourgeois society or of the evanescent "social" variety discussed in Marx's *Grundrisse*[7] — without a whole series of elaborate institutional structures[8] (the state) able to resolve ineliminable conflicts whose very persistence undermines the possibility of both a complete reintegration of that fragmentation which generated alienation in the first place, as well as the realization of a fully reconciled and qualitatively different communist society where the state has withered away.

The economistic side fared even worse. On the one hand, it projected emancipation on the basis of the historically unavoidable decline of necessary labor time within capitalism,[9] while on the other, it defined progress in terms of the multiplication and diversification of needs.[10] But, if progress means that, then the conditions for

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5. Although theories of totalitarianism — both in their "bourgeois" and Council Communist variety — have fallen into disrepute within Left circles during the Cold War and its aftermath, as Wildt convincingly argues, "it was a serious mistake, which still prevents an accurate understanding of contemporary realities." Cf. Andreas Wildt, "Totalitarian State Capitalism: On the Structure and Historical Function of Soviet-Type Societies," *Telos*, no. 41 (Fall, 1979), pp. 33ff.

6. For a similar account criticizing Bahro's influential book *The Alternative* as well as its western followers, see Andrew Arato and Mihaly Vajda, "The Limits of the Leninist Opposition: Reply to Bathrick" in *New German Critique*, no. 19 (Winter, 1980), pp. 167-175.

7. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse. Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, translated by M. Nicolaus (London, 1972), p. 708. As Marx makes clear elsewhere in the book (pp. 490-497), social individuality encompasses all of humanity, with nature becoming its *inorganic body*. How such a vision can be reconciled with biological and psychological particularity is not discussed anywhere — nor does it seem in principle possible in any unmediated form.

8. Hegel, of course, was very much aware of these problems and not only saw alienation as impossible to overcome in any definitive way, but in his *Philosophy of Right*, translated by T.M. Knox (London, 1942), paragraph 185, pp. 133ff., presents civil society as a "spectacle of extravagance and want as well as of...physical and ethical degeneration," which, precisely because of this state of affairs, necessitates the state as its logical outcome and highest achievement.

9. Marx, *Grundrisse*, *op.cit.*, p. 708.

10. Cf. Agnes Heller, *La Teoria dei Bisogni in Marx*, translated by A. Marazzoni (Milan, 1974). Heller's reconstruction of Marx's theory of needs hinges on the claim that "radical needs arise in some way through labor" (p. 99), so that capitalism almost automatically generates the conditions for its own demise to the extent that it cannot satisfy these new needs without undergoing a revolutionary alteration. Earlier, Heller had grounded the revolutionary potentials of the New Left on the ethical ideals arising in everyday life within capitalism. Cf. Agnes Heller, "The Marxist Theory of Revolution and the Revolution of Everyday Life" in *Telos*, no. 6 (Fall, 1970), pp. 212-223. It is easy to see how this same formulation could be subsequently grounded in the presumably qualitatively new radical needs generated by the system, but unfulfillable within it without revolutionary alterations. Leiss' argument, in his *The Limits of Satisfaction* (Toronto, 1976), to the effect that alienation today manifests itself in the inability of individuals to meaningfully correlate their needs and possible objects of their satisfaction, thus feeding into the logic of consumerism where the culture industry mediates the translation of needs into the demands for those goods and services that advanced capitalism can profitably produce, undermines the viability of this whole neo-Marxist account. Unless radical

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emancipation are forever postponed since there can be no decline of necessary labor time as long as needs increase indefinitely.[11] Through the culture industry, advanced capitalism has successfully managed the multiplication of needs to match simultaneously what it could most profitably produce by means of capital-intensive technology while feeding the type of secondary narcissism prevalent today, thus depoliticizing mass consciousness and checkmating any possibility for qualitative social change. Consequently, even if adequate otherwise, the traditional Marxist account could not possibly have a major social impact because of insurmountable internal contradictions. What is crucial, however, is that, unlike narcissism today, alienation posed a threat to the system only in terms of *external* political consequences that disappeared as meaningful possibilities after the worldwide crushing defeat of the Left in the 1920s.

In the 1930s and '40s, the Frankfurt School confronted the fact that alienation in the traditional Marxist sense was not about to be eliminated for both empirical as well as theoretical reasons,[12] and sought to comprehend how it was reconstituted in ever new forms adequate to the changing relations of domination. Its account of authoritarianism and fascism attempted to identify the socialization mechanisms that resulted in the proto-fascist and narcissistic personality. According to it, seen as the latest step in the unfolding of the dialectic of the Enlightenment whereby the attainment of emancipation simultaneously entails regression,[13] the consumerized masses fall victim to the domination of the concept: they are remolded by means of the culture industry to fit precisely the image that the system ascribes to them.[14] This erosion of the last vestiges of individuality produces that narcissistic personality that Lasch, not surprisingly, finds functioning smoothly within bureaucratic institutions[15] — but at the same time undermining the very logic of the system of domination whose rationality is based on rapidly disappearing internal control mechanisms.[16] Critical theorists, however, were so shell-shocked by the horrors of Auschwitz, Hiroshima and Siberia that they failed to pay sufficient attention to the new contradictions developing in the age of one-dimensionality characterized by the successful elimination of all opposition and otherness. Thus, their account turned out so all-encompassing and iron-clad that it ruled out any possibility of emancipatory alternatives.[17]

Marcuse's excursus into biology, instinct theory, or the "Great Refusal" were all futile attempts to find holes in what he himself described as the apparently seamless web of advanced capitalism — efforts that were systematically frustrated by the effective means through which alienation was being constantly renegotiated in

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needs can be translated independently of the predominant manipulated conceptual means into political demands, they will remain forever buried in the precategorical sphere of people's psyches, resulting in unhappiness and pathologies, but not revolutionary politics.

11. Cf. Pier Aldo Rovatti, "The Critique of Fetishism in Marx's Grundrisse" in *Telos*, no. 17 (Fall, 1973), pp. 56-69.

12. For a discussion of these reasons, see Andrew Arato, "Esthetic Theory and Cultural Criticism," in Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt, editors, *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (New York, 1978), pp. 183-219.

13. For an excellent account of this process, see Christian Lenhardt, "The Wanderings of Enlightenment," in John O'Neill, editor, *On Critical Theory* (New York, 1976), pp. 34-77.

14. Cf. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, translated by John Cummings (New York, 1972), pp. 120-167.

15. Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York, 1979), pp. 91ff.

16. Cf. my "The Crisis of One-Dimensionality," *Telos*, no. 35 (Spring, 1978), pp. 43-54.

17. Cf. Axel Honneth, "Communication and Reconciliation: Habermas' Critique of Adorno," *Telos*, no. 39 (Spring, 1979), pp. 45-61.

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everyday life.[18] One-dimensional society produces one-dimensional (or narcissistic) individuals, and all outsiders are either integrated or exterminated.[19] Having painted themselves into a theoretical corner, Marcuse and Co. could only find recourse in aesthetic as the medium safeguarding emancipatory possibilities,[20] and in psychoanalysis as that approach to social reality which, by locating in the instinctual dimension an ineradicable conflict between biological necessity and the administered society, prevented the integrating mechanisms of advanced capitalism from annihilating opposition once and for all.[21]

Neither strategy worked too well. The indictment of the fractured world by means of art was only possible through fractured forms that are consequently incomprehensible to the fractured consciousness of the masses.[22] Thus, the aesthetic dimension remained accessible only to a very restricted elite able to decode its otherwise meaningless message. Similarly, the psychoanalytic gambit saved the general neo-Marxist framework by ontologizing emancipatory possibilities in the biological predicament and by relativizing the effectiveness of new modes of domination. Yet it was unable to point to any possible social resolution beyond such vague options as the rise of the "new sensibility."

While in 1968 Marcuse could conclude his influential *Essay on Liberation* by claiming both that revolutionary "change itself could then occur in a general, unstructured and diffused process of disintegration" and that "erotic instincts" turn into "work instincts,"[23] today it is clear that disintegration in no way automatically

18. Löwy has carefully reconstructed how Marcuse, after a brief romantic period at the beginning of his career, turned first to Heidegger and then increasingly toward rationalism — only to eventually realize all of the debilitating effects of the dialectic of the enlightenment. Thus, in the 1950s he gradually returned to the romantic positions of his youth where the "irrational" came to play an increasingly central role. Cf. Michel Löwy, "Benjamin and Marcuse," in this issue of *Telos*.

19. Particularized as their account of anti-Semitism, this insight was the essence of the Frankfurt School analysis of advanced capitalism. As Jay put it, "Anti-Semitism became a model of the totalistic liquidation of non-identity in the one-dimensional world." Cf. Martin Jay, "The Jews and the Frankfurt School," in *New German Critique*, no. 19 (Winter, 1980), p. 115.

20. Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension* (Boston, 1980), p. 69.

21. Herbert Marcuse, "Political Preface 1966," in *Eros and Civilization* (Boston, 1966), p. xxv.

22. Thus, according to Marcuse, "art has its own language and illuminates reality only through this other language" (cf. Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension, op.cit.*, p. 22). Consequently, "only as estrangement does art fulfill a *cognitive* function: it communicates truth not communicable in any other language; *it contradicts*." (*Ibid.*, p. 10). This is because, as Adorno put it, in breaking with reified everyday language, "radical modern art...is that which has deprived itself of meaning and which *presents itself* as *destitute of meaning*." Cf. "Goldmann and Adorno: To Describe, Understand and Explain," in Lucien Goldmann, *Cultural Crations in Modern Society*, translated by Bart Grahl (St. Louis, 1976), p. 146. Since social reality is characterized by a generalized falsehood, "Works of art do not imitate reality as much as they exemplify its transfiguration." Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aestetische Theorie* (Frankfurt, 1974), p. 199. This explains why, to the McDonaldized consciousness, modern art becomes utterly incomprehensible. For an excellent analysis of Adorno's aesthetics, see Richard Wolin, "The De-aestheticization of Art: On Adorno's *Aesthetische Theorie*" in *Telos*, no. 41 (Fall, 1979), pp. 105-127.

23. Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston, 1969), pp. 83, 91. The desperation of Marcuse's position is betrayed by the need, in this work as well as elsewhere, to salvage long-since bankrupt traditional Marxist theses concerning the lingering central role of the working class, the socialist nature of "really existing socialism" (defended as distorted by the constant capitalist economic pressure), the Third World as an external proletariat, etc. For an excellent critique of Marcuse along these lines, see Murray Bookchin, "Beyond Neo-Marxism," in *Telos*, no. 36 (Summer, 1978), pp. 9-11.

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triggers revolutionary change, and the unleashing of erotic instincts, far from turning into work instincts, generates only repressive desublimation and collective irresponsibility. If anything, Gramsci's opposite claim to the effect that a counter-hegemonic struggle entailing an enormous amount of hard work and discipline — and consequently much of that currently discredited, but unavoidable traditional sublimation — is a condition for qualitative social transformation, is immensely closer to the mark.[24]

Lasch fully accepts Gramsci's views on discipline, authority and tradition, in carefully spelling out the concrete manifestations of the Frankfurt School's theoretical elaborations in terms of the family, education, sports, values, etc. He makes it clear that his work is about capitalism, that the narcissistic personality he describes is the result of capitalist social relations, and that he endorses Freudo-Marxist efforts to reconstitute a viable Left free of dogma and mistakes that in the past have unwittingly reduced the Left to an expression of what it attacked rather than an alternative to it.[25] The situation he describes can best be characterized as the crisis of the "historic compromise," i.e., that model of social reorganization that has allowed capitalism to survive the Great Depression and thrive during the last few decades: "Chronic shortages of energy, rising unemployment, runaway inflation, and the decline of Western colonialism have undermined the economic foundations of hedonistic self-expression. They have destroyed the historic compromise of the 20th-century capitalism."[26]

The message is clear: the present system cannot continue as it is now organized and what is in store for the next few years at least is considerable social restructuring. This, among other things, explains how Lasch's book wound up on Carter's desk and why it feeds hesitantly into the logic of the establishment. It addresses a major problem for the system as a whole rather than only for its "progressive" possibilities, and it masterfully articulates its phenomenal manifestations. Lasch's analysis, however, remains couched in the traditional Marxist framework of inevitably intensifying economic crises. Although the socialist pot of gold at the end of the rapidly disappearing capitalist rainbow has been replaced by a pessimistic vision of hopeless decline and decay, Lasch's analysis overemphasizes the economic determinants of contemporary cultural decadence and overlooks the really *new* feature of the present social predicament, i.e., that the purely economic dimension does not exhaust the causes of the crisis, which are rather rooted in the relatively recent fact that the newly created narcissistic personality impairs the very reproducibility of the system by depriving it of that internal negativity without which it could not function.[27]

24. Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, translated by Q. Hoare and G.N. Smith (London, 1971), pp. 349ff. Already in 1917 he wrote: "One must counter discipline with discipline. Bourgeois discipline, however, is mechanical and authoritative, while socialist discipline is autonomous and spontaneous.... This is the character of autonomous discipline: to be life itself, the thought itself of whoever observes the discipline." Cf. Pedro Cavalcanti and Paul Piccone, editors, *History, Philosophy and Culture in the Young Gramsci* (St. Louis, 1975), p. 49.

25. Lasch, "Politics and Social Theory," *op.cit.*, p. 199.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

27. Unlike the Great Depression, which was merely a crisis of system integration and thus remediable by means of massive government intervention and technocratic management, the present one also involves a crisis of social integration translated into one of system integration. Consequently, it cannot be handled in the same way since, as Habermas put it, "There is no administrative production of meaning." Cf. *Legitimation Crisis, op.cit.*, p. 70. Thus, it becomes necessary, from the viewpoint of the system as a whole, to create the conditions that will lead beyond the culture of narcissism to the spontaneous reconstitution of individuality and

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Since there is no significant internal political opposition today, any meaningful criticism cannot avoid becoming fuel for reconstituting that which it criticizes. In this sense, the fact that Lasch's thesis is becoming integrated within the logic of the establishment is no criticism of him — not only because it cannot be otherwise, but also because today, paradoxically enough, hope for emancipation has become inextricably connected with the possibility of further capitalist rationalization. His analysis points out the social and psychological effects of the present crisis and the need for a new reflection on the matter, unshackled by the discredited categories of Left conventional wisdom. Clearly, in the age of narcissism, any talk of socialism is at best premature, since at this stage it could only mean an extension of some variation of the existing and much despised bureaucratic apparatus overseeing an increasingly cretinized populace. Similarly, any focus on politics in the traditional Marxist sense is hopelessly obsolete and irrelevant. Thus, Lasch's challenge to the Left to redirect its focus and rethink its goals can be taken up only by systematically investigating the major changes that advanced capitalism has undergone during the last ten or fifteen years, and the new options that these developments make possible.

For various reasons, however, the Left is unable to undertake this task. In fact, far from providing solutions, a large sector of the Left is rapidly becoming a major part of the problem and Lasch is justified in arguing that today "any criticism of contemporary society that hopes to get beneath the surface has to criticize, at the same time, much of what currently goes under the name of radicalism."[28] Having long since lost any political constituency, the American Left has retreated into the academy, where it tries desperately to identify any ripples in the social waters as expressions of "resistance" or otherwise evidence that the good old class struggle is still going on — even if only in the most tenebrous recesses of sexual life — in the face of overwhelming indications to the contrary. In this context, it is all too easy to see narcissism as a defiant political act of resistance — especially by those revolutionary academics who became academics after they failed as revolutionaries and now celebrate in mystified theoretical jargon what they found impossible to carry out in practice.[29] Thus, it is not all that paradoxical to find well-integrated tenured professors charging that "the attack on narcissism is the protest of those intellectuals who have been integrated into late capitalism as producers of its ideology and guardians of its moral norms."[30] It is as if capitalism is much more efficient than it seems and has hired additional radical lackeys to criticize its apologists and thus keep them on their toes!

Such a defense of narcissism is a curious one. Seen as evidence of disintegrating cultural hegemony (work ethics, self-discipline, commitment, sacrifice, etc.), narcissism is turned into the banner of "guerrillas of desire" in a struggle where sexual repression is hypostatized to the level of the archetypal bourgeois repression. Aside from the fact that there is absolutely no positive correlation between healthy sex and emancipatory politics — in fact, in the U.S., sexual liberation and increased depoliticization have gone hand in hand[31] — it remains to be shown how the

community, i.e., what is needed to revitalize rapidly eroding internal control mechanisms. In this sense, for the first time in a long while, emancipatory possibilities coincide with the project of further capitalist rationalization.

28. Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism, op.cit.*, pp. 21-22.

29. According to Bookchin, this "retreat from the factory to the academy...has denied socialism the right to decent burial by perpetuating it as a professional ideology." Cf. Bookchin, *op.cit.*, p. 5.

30. Stanley Aronowitz, "On Narcissism" in *Telos,* no. 44 (Summer, 1980), p. 70ff.

31. Marcuse recognized that "the liberalization of sexuality provides an instinctual basis for the repressive and aggressive power of the affluent society.... [Sexual] liberalization

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narcissistic personality can be conned into investing the immense amount of social energy required by the construction of a "socialist" society. Even more recalcitrant than Russian peasants, modern narcissists *may be coerced* into action only by a repressive bureaucratic apparatus much more efficient and ruthless than the present one — an option morally and politically inconceivable. Stalin's troubles with recalcitrant peasants will appear trivial compared to those confronted by any "socialist" regime trying to cope with the narcissistic personality. If the bumbling but diligent Good Soldier Svejk gives way to a narcissistic Zonker, *no* social system will work effectively — and to think that a Zonker can be turned overnight into a Stakhanov with a mere shift in the control and-or ownership of the means of production is a pipedream that no amount of cheap Marxist moonshine can make credible. For radicals to trot out the narcissistic personality as the new potential agency of social change is an embarrassing act of utmost political desperation. The culture industry has long known that, far from being a prelude to taking power, the narcissistic identification of oneself with "the glamour of an actress or an athlete," or turning toward one's "fantasies of sexuality and power,"[32] is only a prelude to buying more of the luxurious junk advertised by those actresses and athletes.

The Left's flirtation with narcissism as a moment of resistance and, therefore, as part of an emancipatory politics, is a result of its inability to break with its linear, one-dimensional thinking and locate in its political analyses the kind of qualitative changes that it otherwise glorifies in theory. Thus, Aronowitz perceptively asks why it was that Vietnam and not Korea precipitated a challenge to "the moral economy of late capitalism." In a stubborn effort to provide an answer continuous with standard New Left analyses of the 1960s,[33] however, he ultimately zeroes in on the sexual revolution as the determining difference.[34] As such, a case can only be made for women's

strengthens the cohesion of the whole" (Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation, op.cit.*, p. 9). Only with the *transcendence* of "the sexual sphere" into "refusal and rebellion" does the process have a potentially emancipatory political impact for him. Marcuse, of course, went off the deep end of naturalistic ethics when he further postulated that the political radicalism resulting from the breaking of social taboos triggers a new morality in reaction to the old culture's betrayal of humanistic promises — a new morality which must " 'sink down' into the 'biological dimension' and modify organic behavior" (*ibid.*, p. 10). Thus, emancipation is ultimately not *an act of freedom*, but almost a mechanical result of the contradictions unavoidably generated by the unfolding of the logic of capitalism. Unfortunately, Marcuse's "counterrevolution anchored in the instinctual structure" (*ibid.*, p. 11) has not and cannot be displaced by the revolt becoming "second" nature because morality is not a matter of mechanical and biological processes but one of values and choices. During the 1970s the discrepancy between the humanistic promises and the consumeristic fulfilment has been crystalized in the narcissistic personality which appears as both its cause and its result, thus legitimating it and defusing whatever radical political content it may have had.

32. Aronowitz, *op.cit.*, p. 73. Aronowitz really thinks that "people empower themselves... through the fantasy of controlling the world and remaking it in their own image." This, however, is also, in its extreme pathological form, the traditional definition of insanity. Aside from that, it is not immediately clear how identification with the fastest football player of the most glamorous actress can, *in principle*, be a prelude to anything but frustration: there will always be only *one* fast*est* football player, and *one* most glamorous actress. Everyone simply cannot be what these exceptional people are, in socialist societies or elsewhere, without destroying precisely what made such an identity desirable, i.e., its uniqueness and excellence in an ineliminable context of conformity and relative inadequacy.

33. Aronowitz' own analysis, of course, was developed in his *False Promises* (New York, 1973). For an excellent critique of the book's general theoretical framework, see Jean Cohen, "False Premises," *Telos*, no. 24 (Summer, 1974), pp. 135-158.

34. Aronowitz belabors under the misapprehension that there is something revolutionary about sex and that his generation was the first ever to "masturbate under stairs and in the bathrooms" — something that presumably explains the upheavals of the 1960s. What he misses

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liberation and it is no accident that Aronowitz's analysis fizzles out into a weak defense of feminism. Far from providing a vision of revolutionary transformation, however, most of the promising political thrusts of feminism are either in the old, discredited Women's Liberation Movement direction of seeking merely formal equality (the ERA), or in bringing about a radical shift in children's socialization processes so as to produce a degendered society.[35] The most likely results of these political projects is either the full integration of women in the already bankrupt model of welfare or bureaucratic capitalism now in the midst of its most serious crisis since its inception, or the degeneration of feminism to the level of a badly disguised ideology of upwardly mobile professional women merely using affirmative action on the way to a success understood in the crassest "bourgeois" sense.[36]

The Vietnam war was a watershed in U.S. history, but not because Aronowitz's "guerrillas of desire" discovered sex and rather than fighting the war, "streaked between cars, masturbated under stairs and in the bathrooms or conspired against teachers."[37] Nor was it because it was the first war that the U.S. lost as a prelude to the decline of U.S. hegemony — as even Lasch is inclined to believe.[38] Rather, it was because it meant the exhaustion of a model. It meant that the bureaucratic apparatus developed during the New Deal has turned out to be fundamentally incompatible with the widespread narcissism that it generated. Although, as Lasch points out, the narcissist functions well within the bureaucratic apparatus, the latter cannot do the same when manned by narcissists. The irresponsibility and hedonism of the narcissistic personality systematically corrodes those internal checks and balances without which the bureaucratic apparatus becomes a social Frankenstein whose functioning results in waste, inefficiency, and all of the traits associated with large bureaucracies unrestrained by external controls. The attack against the state Behemoth, however, has not come from below — where, if anything, it takes a right-wing twist and becomes a call for a return to pre-1929 laissez-faire economics and a fundamentalist Protestant lifestyle — but from monopoly capital, which finds the bureaucratic apparatus a major nuisance encroaching on its projects of further economic

is that it was only because of the development of new contraceptive measures (the pill) and the completion of the capitalist shift from extensive to intensive development (thus no longer requiring a constantly expanding labor force) that made possible a *successful* sexual revolution. The result during the 1970s has not been further social upheaval, but the further disintegration of family and community structures, the penetration of the commodity form into every crevice of everyday life, and the spread of the narcissistic personality. Aronowitz' and the New Left dream of forcibly gluing together the irreconcilable demands of blacks, women and workers through abstract metaphysical bombast clashes with the political reality of the irreducible contradictoriness of all of these groups' *practical* demands. Thus, any analysis such as his that focuses primarily on the sexual revolution can only end up making a case for feminist causes — and even then only on the embarrassing ground of vindicating for them the very same kind of individuality that he had disparagingly dismissed in the opening pages of his article as a recent and troublesome Western discovery. While the alternative of a "collective consciousness" is an interesting and intriguing metaphysical speculation, so far all of its concrete historical manifestations have been ideological smokescreens for repressive totalitarian policies (e.g., Mao's China and Stalin's Russia).

35. Cf. Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (Berkeley, 1978); and Jessica Benjamin, "Authority and the Family Revisited; or a World without Fathers?" in *New German Critique*, no. 13 (Winter, 1978), pp. 35-57.

36. A fuller critique of this development is provided in my paper "The Future of Feminism," forthcoming.

37. Aronowitz, "On Narcissism," *op.cit.*, p. 70.

38. Lasch, "Politics and Social Theory," *op.cit.*, p. 200.

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rationalization. It is impossible here to elaborate the forms that this political confrontation takes other than by alluding to the efforts to reconstitute the long defunct public sphere as a buffer against the bureaucracy and the lingering competitive sector whose interests are clearly on the side of further extending the interventionist state to protect its flagging fortunes.

This effort to reconstitute the public sphere led, during the early 1970s, to the further corporatization of political life, the reduction of the repressive apparatus, and the attempt to decentralize planning and executive functions. In foreign policy, it meant the ushering in of a new imperialism spearheaded by *cultural* hegemony, Carter's "human rights" campaign and the stabilization of relations with China and the Soviet Union. Both domestic and foreign policy efforts failed during the early part of Carter's presidency, eventually necessitating an aborted recycling of the discredited Cold War model in foreign policy and of bureaucratic intervention in domestic matters.

The reasons why Carter's original (1976) program failed are not hard to locate: he could not sell Congress on anything other than that pork-barrel legislation he had promised to phase out. The confrontation between the legislative and the executive branches reflected fairly clearly defined and conflicting interests. Whereas the executive is concerned with the totality and thus can project major policy changes and programs of socio-economic reorganization, the legislative branch is too tied to localized and lingering interests linked to the competitive sector to readily participate in such bold ventures unless a major crisis swells demands for radical changes from below and successfully silences private and local interests.

Thus, contrary to the predominant perception of recent developments in foreign and domestic policy as a return to the Cold War model or increasingly interventionist politics internally, the collapse of the Carter program could be seen as a necessary *temporary* retreat to deal with immediate political contingencies — while at the same time allowing the crisis to reach proportions sufficiently large to paralyze Congress and thus introduce otherwise unacceptable policy changes. It does not take much imagination to see that the "American way of life" successfully marketed from the 1930s on with consumerism, suburbanization, and the automobile has to be drastically altered by reconstituting communities, eliminating institutionalized waste, rebuilding railroads, the cities and, in general, the predominant lifestyles. To the extent that innumerable private interests will be negatively affected by these changes, only a major crisis or its equivalent will be able to concentrate the political power in the executive branch, thus allowing it to implement such a change. Similarly, the new imperialism based on cultural hegemony can successfully function only if internal socio-economic policies have stabilized the situation enough to allow the marketing of ever newer "American culture" abroad.

Such a one-dimensional scenario seemingly leaves no role for the traditional Left, which, crucified between a stale statist vision and the particularistic politics of the various social fragments that it seeks to substitute for the evanescent proletariat, is no obstacle to the new monopoly capitalist reconstruction. Its survival as a political force will hinge on whether it will be able to develop a critique of modern society not as simply *capitalist* society but as the expression of the logic of the Enlightenment. But such a critique entails a redefinition of the problem for, as indicated in relation to the Frankfurt School's problematic, it allows no possible solution. In that analysis, the domination of the concept can be balanced only by the irrationality of romantic regression to a mythical past or the elitist escape into the aesthetic dimension. None of these options is politically meaningful.

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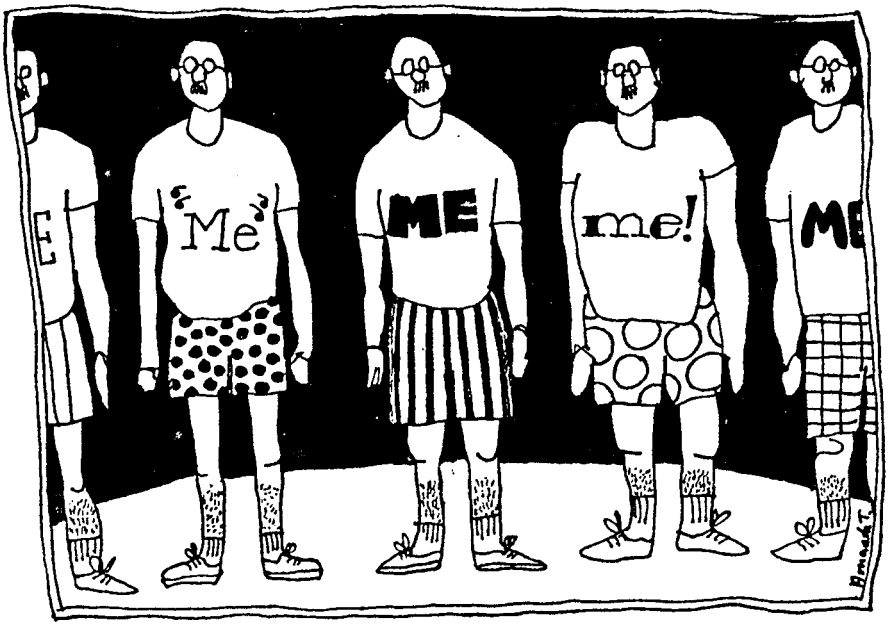
While *The Culture of Narcissism* eloquently spells out the present socio-historical predicament, it cannot successfully translate its psychoanalytic categories to a level sufficiently broad to capture the new, contradictory dynamics of advanced capitalism. Lasch's intentions to the contrary notwithstanding, he does not escape projecting a linear logic, which, by extrapolating the future out of a brutally frank reconstruction of the recent past, fails to emphasize those new conflicts whose resolution can break the trajectory he traces. The decline of the public sphere, the depoliticization of everyday life, the degeneration of traditional emancipatory alternatives to mere extensions of what they seek to displace, and the many other phenomena Lasch describes, have all redefined socio-political realities in such a way that it is necessary to ask new questions concerning these matters. To what extent has the most recent modernization of advanced capitalism pitted the competitive and the monopoly sectors against each other in such a way as to generate a whole new set of political contradictions whose outcome is determined by the skillful manipulation of traditional political agencies? What are the possibilities of reconstituting capitalism on the basis of a new international division of labor determined by the requirements of capital-intensive multinational corporations? Is a new "historic compromise" possible? What is the role of the narcissistic personality within such a new model of socio-economic and political organization? Will monopoly capital be forced to at least minimally reconstitute individuality in order to checkmate the cumbersome bureaucratic apparatus? What are the emancipatory options opened by such a reconstitution? Last but not least, what are the political dynamics that will determine how these questions are tackled in the next decade? Does the success of Lasch's book and its related critiques indicate that the work itself has become, or is in the process of becoming, part of the theoretical ammunition necessary to demolish the still powerful remnants of the "historic compromise"?

To start to deal with these issues would mean to undertake the debate concerning the 1980s that *Culture of Narcissism* has opened but only approached in terms of its phenomenal manifestations.



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NARCISSISM AND THE PROBLEM OF "MORALE"

by Christopher Lasch

Randolph Bourne pointed out a long time ago that modern war has made patriotism superfluous. During World War I, young men submitted to the draft, according to Bourne, not because they wanted to make the world safe for democracy or even because they were eager to take part in a holy war against the Huns, but because they saw no alternative to military service. "Conscientious objection," an isolated gesture devoid of political content, appeared as meaningless as death on the battlefield. Men served in the armed forces because they could not avoid serving. The power of the state, Bourne wrote, rested on "coercion from above...rather than patriotism from below" — on acquiescence rather than cooperation.

Recent response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and to Carter's attempt to revive the draft and other cold war measures, exemplifies and confirms Bourne's point. The public has supported Carter's tough new line only in the sense that it feels completely powerless to resist another draft, another war scare, another war. My impression is that most Americans, during the weeks when the crisis in Afghanistan was at its height, didn't much like Carter's new policy, didn't think it was justified by Soviet actions, didn't think it would work in any case, and saw it quite cynically as an attempt to head off the Kennedy forces in the Democratic primaries. At the same time, they believed that they themselves could do nothing to stop this new policy — or to affect decisions in Washington in any way at all.

I don't mean to exaggerate the passivity of the electorate. If Carter attempts to revive the draft — as opposed to registration for the draft — it is a safe bet that large numbers of young men will actively resist it, on a scale perhaps exceeding resistance to the Vietnam war. The point isn't that all Americans accept the status quo but that even those who mount no challenge to it act more out of apathy than out of enthusiastic approval of the objectives of national policy. Stuart Ewen, writing in the immediate aftermath of the official furor over Afghanistan, speaks of the mobilization of our population "for patriotism, for self-denial, and for war." It is true that the Carter administration has attempted, rather fitfully, to create what Ewen calls a "vast patriotic unity." But it is now clear that this particular attempt has already failed — hence the recent efforts by the White House to downplay the crisis both in Afghanistan and in Iran. I think Ewen misunderstands the nature of modern propaganda. Appeals to patriotism, duty, and sacrifice are out of date. The prevailing tone of modern propaganda, as Jacques Ellul has argued, is low-keyed, unemotional, dry, and matter-of-fact. Authorities no longer seek to justify their actions by appealing to a higher standard of morality or even to a sense of national unity. They ask people to submit not to what is right but to what is.

In advanced industrial society, the prevailing system of social control discourages popular participation in public events, even in the form of patriotism. The propaganda of crisis seeks not so much to mobilize public opinion as to justify the power of professional crisis-managers. For a long time now, experts have told the public, in effect: "Leave the decisions to us. Let us do the driving, while you relax and enjoy the scenery." In war as in peace, citizens have been deliberately relegated to the role of passengers. Bourne himself missed part of the point when he said that the power of the industrial state rests on "coercion from above." Coercion remains a last resort, but from day to day the power of the modern state rests neither on coercion nor on

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consent but on a division of labor that enables professional managers to monopolize decision-making and to deal with the rest of the population as consumers — of commodities, of expert services, of politics.

This division of labor holds in production as well as in the political realm. Indeed it is even more obvious in industry, provided that we understand that the division of labor between the design of tasks and the performance of tasks has to be seen as a system of control, not simply as a by-product of modern technology. As Braverman, Noble, Montgomery, Marglin, and others have shown, the modern division of labor grew out of a struggle for control of production. The managers expropriated the workers' craft knowledge and centralized it under their own direction. Thus they created a situation in which they alone design the productive machinery, while the workers merely carry out instructions formulated in the planning department.

But note the contradiction at the heart of this process, which shows up, once again, even more clearly in industry than in politics (where it is obscured by the remnants of an earlier democratic system). Experts in "human relations" have tried unsuccessfully to solve it for years. Unfortunately for the managers, the "human factor" in industry can never entirely be dispensed with. The "human problem in industry" takes two closely related forms. Having been eliminated from participation in the design of work, the workers become apathetic; their "morale" declines; they suffer from "anomie." Even the most sophisticated machinery, however, cannot altogether eliminate the need for human ingenuity and resourcefulness on the shop floor. As David Noble has pointed out, managers complain simultaneously that the workers lack enterprise and initiative and that the workers merely get in the way of the machines. The whole effect of their own innovations, starting with Taylorism eighty years ago, has been to eliminate enterprise and initiative or at least to drive them underground; yet it turns out that even the most sophisticated modern plant cannot operate without competent workers eager to put their skills at the service of management. One manager says flatly, "We want no decisions made on the shop floor," only to contradict himself in the next breath: "We want workers who can think." Noble rightly calls this the "central contradiction of capitalist production."

The problem of worker "morale," as it is known in the jargon of human relations, dramatizes the underlying problem not merely of modern production but of the modern state. Almost every political innovation of the last eighty years has discouraged popular participation in politics. The state has dispensed with patriotism and sacrifice. Yet it cannot quite operate without them. Thus although the development of modern military policy leads logically to reliance on exclusively technological warfare, strategies based on nuclear deterrence or other forms of aerial annihilation have proved inadequate or self-defeating, while conventional warfare requires the enthusiastic support of populations that can no longer be mobilized, however, by conventional appeals to heroism and to the morality that it is sweet and fitting to die for your country. Vietnam illustrates both the inefficacy of technological warfare and the obsolescence of patriotic morality. To the extent that modern industrial populations have been excluded from political participation, they no longer identify themselves vicariously with the nation and its manifest destiny.

Political anomie, like the "morale" problem in industry, has been under official study for a long time, and it is probably inevitable that a critical analysis of narcissism — even an analysis that explicitly condemns the division of labor on which modern society is based — should be appropriated by the managerial elite in its search for solutions to the problems created by its own methods of political management. Just as the human relations school of industrial management earlier absorbed

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elements of Freudian psychology into its diagnosis of industrial anomie, so today the policy-making establishment seizes on "narcissism" as an explanation for a lack of public spirit that actually originates in the citizens' exclusion from political participation.

Since the underlying problem is political, not psychological, shouldn't we ban psychology from critical analysis altogether, lest we fall into the psychologizing mode of our adversaries? Things are not so simple: political changes have a psychological dimension. The shift from authoritative to manipulative styles of social control and the reduction of citizens to consumers — partly because these changes are closely associated with changes in family life — have encouraged the emergence of a new type of narcissistic personality: precisely the kind of individual who can no longer be mobilized by appeals to country and conscience. "To the narcissistic," as Jacoby writes, "sacrifice is a con-job, a loss with no benefits." In our society, of course, there are plenty of realistic reasons to regard sacrifice as a con job. When President Carter exhorts people to turn down the thermostat, and the utilities respond by raising prices to compensate for lower demand, the perception that sacrifice is a swindle has a lot to be said for it. We have to distinguish between political disaffection, which rests on a realistic awareness that sacrifices usually fall on those who can least afford them, and a loss of the very capacity for sacrifice, loyalty, and personal commitment. [1] Our consumer culture and our system of social control undermine the

1. Two examples, both drawn from the antiwar movement, will help to clarify this distinction. In the recent film *Coming Home*, starring Jane Fonda and Jon Voigt, a paraplegic Vietnam veteran lectures to a high-school assembly on the evils of war. The burden of his harangue is that those who go to fight in Vietnam will die there; and while one can agree that the American cause in Vietnam — and in future police actions that may be undertaken for the defense of corporate interests — was not worth the sacrifice of American lives, one senses in this film an attitude that goes beyond opposition to American imperialism to an opposition to any form of sacrifice at all, an attitutde based not on moral or political principle but on a survival mentality that clings to life at all costs. It is as if the makers of *Coming Home* were unable to imagine any form of loyalty that might justify the sacrifice of life. The character played by Voigt has come home from Vietnam with wounds deeper than those imagined by his creators, a paralysis of the moral will; and this example shows that although it is possible to distinguish analytically between a refusal to make sacrifices for an unworthy cause and a damaged capacity for sacrifice, historically they often prove inseparable. The kind of historical experience of which Vietnam represents the logical culmination — the ordering of our lives by others, without our consent — ends by depriving us of the capacity to take responsibility for decisions that affect us or for adopting any stance toward life except that of survivors: one of the hallmarks of the narcissistic personality.

In the early days of the Vietnam protest, a student at the University of Iowa interrupted a discussion of "our" foreign policy to deny the responsibility for the Vietnam war that seemed to be implied by the first-person pronoun. "It's not my war," she said. "It's *their* war; it's *their* country; and neither has anything to do with me." At the time, it seemed to me that this outburst represented a salutary corrective to the kind of discussions conducted by academics on the implicit assumption that such discussions should be confined to a policy-making establishment that includes professors as a kind of loyal opposition. I still think so. Subsequent events, however, have qualified this impression by suggesting that many students who rejected "their" war also rejected any other forms of loyalty as well, and refused to assume responsibility for anything on the grounds that they had no control over the "decisions that affect our lives." Does this mean that opposition to the war can be reduced to personal pathology? Of course not. What it means is that the experience of victimization, which justifies resistance, can also destroy the capacity for resistance by destroying the sense of personal responsibility. This, of course, is the deepest injury associated with victimization: one finally learns to confront life not as a moral agent but solely as a passive victim, and political protest degenerates into a whine of self-pity. Witness the innumerable variations on the ever-popular leftist theme of the injustice of "blaming the victim."

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capacity for autonomous action and are often deliberately designed to lead to this result. That is why our culture — the culture of immediate gratification, non-participation, and "non-binding commitments" — can be accurately described as a culture of narcissism.

But to analyze it as such does not automatically dispose of the question of whether the dominant culture has destroyed all competing forms of cultural life. If certain subcultures have remained resistant to the prevailing cultural forms, that is a subject for separate analysis — the kind of analysis that Professor Elshtain's paper, if I read it correctly, seeks to initiate. She asks whether families have "been drained of their normative meaning in Midwest farming communities as well as in urban-academic centers in the Northeast." I suspect that her question should be answered in the negative. As Jacoby points out, it is the "most advanced social groups — affluent young professionals — [who] expose most sharply the advanced tendencies of capitalism." But does this mean that we should turn to the most politically backward groups — the right-to-lifers, the new evangelicals, the opponents of gun control and abortion — for what Elshtain calls "signs of hope"? This is not her point, I take it; nor is it my own point when I say that the left has chosen the wrong side in the cultural civil war now taking shape in America.

As Jacoby says, the "bumper stickers for family revival are worse" than the banners of sexual liberation. The important point, however, is that "secure and coherent" family relations constitute a "transhistorical human need," in Kovel's words. In our society that need is met neither by the dominant cultural forms, which in one way or another are based on "liberation" from family ties, nor by the defensive, rigid, and authoritarian movements that have sprung up as a right-wing reaction to the culture of narcissism. Criticism of the right-wing reaction, in order to become something more than an echo of the dominant values, has to acknowledge the legitimacy of the emotional needs that find expression — even if it is a distorted expression — in the politics of cultural protest. A morally plausible criticism of the right would have to understand the way in which a permissive, therapeutic morality that demands sympathy and understanding for criminals, sex offenders, and juvenile delinquents offends popular ideas of justice, according to which people should accept the consequences of their actions. It would have to understand why the campaign against the nuclear family, conducted by middle-class radicals, feminists, and the "helping professions" has so little attraction to people who take a highly unsentimental view of marriage and family life yet recognize that domestic responsibilities represent a stabilizing influence, a source of personal discipline, in a world where personal disintegration remains always an imminent danger. In short, the only criticism of "traditional" values that is worth listening to is one that simultaneously undertakes at the same time a "critique of modern society," in Piccone's words, "not as simply capitalist society but as the expression of the logic of the Enlightenment" — the logic that celebrates among other things the free-floating individual detached from family ties and ultimately from emotional ties of any kind.

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Notes and Commentary:

ON THE GERMAN-JEWISH HERITAGE

by Jürgen Habermas

It was first during the winter of 1967-68 that I came to teach at the New School, and to live in New York. It turned out that teaching at this place, and living in this city were two enterprises, intertwined of course, but of two different kinds of excitement. At that time when the protests against the Vietnam War and the riots in the black ghettos reached a peak, when many students decided to go to Canada, and President Johnson decided to resign, when the East Village was turned into the flourishing and suffering center of the counter-culture, while the Upper West side made everyone believe that it was on the verge of an incessant decline, and the Shakespeare Company started that passionate and uproarious musical which soon became a world-famous play, at that time the city displayed a strange mixture of hellenistic charm, of despair and rebellion. But how different was the New School! *Not that it remained untouched by that turmoil — to the contrary. For me,* however, the New School was not merely part and parcel of a foreign country in which I happened to be. For me who had been brought up in the context of the postwar German university and in the tradition of German philosophy, the New School appeared as somehow extramural, a world of its own with a particular meaning.

Let me remind you that many of those who then taught at the Graduate Faculty represented the continuity of what Aswin Johnson once had founded. Hans Staudinger, Adolf Löwe, Arnold Brecht and Erich Hula still provided an immediate link with the University in Exile, with that early period when Emil Lederer, Eduard Heimann, Max Wertheimer, Hans Speier, Albert Salomon, and all the others had created the non-mistakeable image of the New School. Moreover, Aaron Gurvitch, Hans Jonas and Hannah Arendt formed that unique Triple Alliance that for a long time stamped the philosophical profile of the school. And finally, in the Sociology Department, the spirit as well as the theory of Alfred Schütz was very much alive — due to the influential teaching of one of his former students, Peter Berger.

I could see from the very beginning that the clocks were ticking somewhat differently at this place. I remember the reception in President Everett's house upon my arrival; during those first encounters I got irritated by some, however slight, hesitations towards my person. It was only subsequently, after I had been warmly adopted by everybody, that I realized an inconspicuous displacement of generation: coming from Frankfurt, from Horkheimer's and Adorno's Institute of Social Research, the shadow of distrust did not apply to me personally, it pertained to an ambivalent past still present in vivid memories.

My wife and I experienced this time-machine-phenomenon during many hospitable evenings also in a different way, when the span of time which separates one generation from the next melted away, and when we felt pulled back to the intellectual scene of the late twenties and the thirties. This kind of adoption of which I am very proud, meant something like the opening of a gate. Passing this gate I found a surprising way back to familiar traditions, familiar intellectual attitudes and motives which I only then realized had been preserved in a state dif-

*This is the text of the commencement address delivered at the New School for Social Research, June 4, 1980.

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ferent from where I had learned them. Here in Exile, the most profound of the German traditions had retained their moral integrity and therewith that element of unbroken self-confidence without which ideas lose their force.

I am not in the position to pay back the debt I owe the New School; and even for the more humble intention of explaining at least the kind of debt which I feel, personal reminiscences will not be sufficient. Apart from the general impact of having lived within the academic boundaries of the school for some time, I have learned, and keep learning from the works of some of its distinguished members. It should be no surprise that I, as a student in the field of social theory, have learned most from A. Schütz and H. Arendt. Let me mention three achievements of fundamental importance: the reconstruction of an Aristotelian concept of "praxis" for political theory, the introduction of an Husserlian concept of "life-world" into social theory and the rediscovery of Kant's analysis of *Urteilskraft* or judgement for a theory of rationality.

(1) When H. Arendt in *The Human Condition*, which I still regard as her main philosophical work, reintroduced the venerable distinction between poiesis and praxis, she was not primarily interested in a renewal of Aristotelian theory. Her immediate intention was a systematic, and not a philological one, namely to solve those basic conceptual confusions which resulted from the specific modern temptation of reducing the political practice of citizens to just another kind of instrumental action or strategic interaction. The outcome of her critique is a concept of action as "praxis" which articulates the historical experiences and the normative perspectives of what we today call participatory democracy; this concept is not less modern, but only more adequate than most contemporary action theories deriving from Hobbes, Bentham or Marx. H. Arendt stresses particularly three features: the fact of human plurality, the symbolic nature of the web of human relationships, and the fact of human natality, the counterpart of mortality (*Sterblichkeit*, in a sense which presupposes beings who know that they must die).

The analysis of the *first* feature (plurality) concentrates on the intersubjectivity of acting in concert, where the multiple perspectives of participants who occupy inevitably different standpoints, are reciprocally connected. The unifying power of intersubjectivity preserves the plurality of individual perspectives; even in the case of violent repression intersubjectivity cannot be replaced by a higher order of subjectivity. The analysis of the *second* feature focuses on *language* as the mechanism for coordinating the concert of different actions. In communication, individuals appear actively as unique beings; at the same time they must recognize one another as finally equal in their responsibility, that is in their capacity to say "Yes" and "No". As long as people talk to each other with the intention of reaching a consensus the very idea of a common understanding, built into speech, ground claims for a radical equality which might be suspended for the time being but not stifled forever. The analysis of the *third* feature (natality) reveals the phenomenon of an actor's *free will*. The birth of every individual is the promise of a new beginning; to act means to be able to seize an initiative and to do the unanticipated. It is this innovative potential which makes the domain of praxis vulnerable and dependent on protective institutions. Only when they originate through the power of common convictions of those who act in concert, these institutions take the form of a "constitution of liberty"; and liberty can be maintained only as long as political institutions in turn protect that source of unimpaired intersubjectivity from which a communicatively generated power springs.

I have learned from H. Arendt how to approach a theory of communicative

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action; what I cannnot see, is that this approach should be in contradiction to a critical theory of society. I rather find in it a sharp analytical instrument for saving the Marxist tradition from its own productivist aberrations. What Marx called *kritisch-praktische Tätigkeit*, revolutionary praxis in its most general sense, could not be elucidated more strikingly than by H. Arendt in her chapter on the abyss of freedom and the *novus ordo seclorum* where she connects the emancipatory freedom that comes from being liberated with the creative freedom that arises out of the spontaneity of founding something new. [1]

(2) H. Arendt locates praxis in the "space of appearance" into which actors enter, encounter each other, are seen and heard, and called upon every day. Being a political theorist she was first of all interested in the normative question how that space should be institutionalized as a public domain. The social scientist, however, must face the descriptive question as to how that space of appearance which forms the horizon of everyday life actually works. A. Schütz spent his life in answering this very question; for this purpose he utilized and transformed Husserl's concept of the "life-world." Let me mention only one central idea, the implication of which has so far remained obscure. It may be that Schütz himself was not quite satisfied with his own clarifications; he returned again and again to the beginnings of his project, each time re-analyzing the life-world from the same point of departure. This starting point is the distiction between the "problematic" and that "which is taken for granted." Schütz conceived the lifeworld as the unexamined ground of everyday praxis; so he took pains first to explain what it means to take something for granted, as simply given "until further notice." Let me restate this case in my own words.

In communicative action participants can coordinate their different plans only on the condition that they reach a common definition of the situation with which they have to cope. They offer different interpretations and try to come to an agreement. In these interpretative achievements each actor draws from a common stock of knowledge which is provided by a cultural tradition shared with others. It is this *background-knowledge* which represents the context of the life-world, and in which any communicative action is imbedded. Now, the crucial question is: in what sense are we entitled to consider these background assumptions and practices of everyday communication to be knowledge?

There are two different aspects. *On the one hand*, to those who act in concert life-world is present as a background in the mode of implicit self-evidence. This certainty is in striking contrast to that of any piece of knowledge which is explicitly expressed in an utterance. Any such expression can be rejected: Alter may say "No" to the claim of validity which Ego raises with his utterance. If, *on the other hand*, however, it is an essential feature of knowledge, that it maintains an internal relationship to validity-claims and criticism and that it can thus become problematic, those very background assumptions and practices which are always taken for granted do not have this basic property of knowledge. What is beyond any doubt appears as if it never could become problematic; it can only break down.

So, the proposition that the life-world is taken for granted reveals a paradox: the background-knowledge which functions in the form of the self-evidences of everyday life is the paradigm case for what we know with certainty, and yet it is, at the same time, deprived from the character of true knowledge — because of its peculiar certainty it is prevented from even entering the dimension where its validity could be intentionally questioned, and consciously accepted. It occurs to us only under the

1. Hannah Arendt, *The Life of Mind,* vol. II (New York, 1978), p. 195ff.

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contingent pressure of a problematic situation, that relevant pieces of background knowledge come to the fore. Only an earthquake makes us aware of what we all the time took for granted about the safety of the ground. And even in such problematic situations, we have at our disposal only that part of our background-knowledge which has been set free from its enclosure in cultural traditions, social institutions, skills and competences, which are present in the mode of a self-evident, intuitive know-how. Background-knowledge will not be known explicitly before it is, piece by piece, converted into semantic contents of the speech of those who act in concert.

There is an important methodological consequence of all this. Cultural tradition, social integration and socialization are three different aspects of the same process of the symbolic reproduction of the life-world which is channelled through the medium of communicative action. To the extent that the social sciences deal with this process, they face the task of analyzing a background which is taken for granted. The only available method is one which has been practiced mainly by philosophers: the rational reconstruction of the pre-theoretic, implicit know-how of competent subjects.

A. Schütz realized that the social sciences had to make empirical use of a philosophical method. What he did *not* realize was the problem that it does not just depend on the choice of a theoretical attitude whether the social scientist in fact gets access to the life-world. Background-knowledge is not at his disposal either, except for the occurence of a challenge, in view of which the life-world would become problematic as a whole.

The analysis of the life-world is a self-referential enterprise. The scientist could not hope to grasp it if it were not for a provocative threat to the symbolic structures of those spheres of life the reproduction of which depends on communicative action. Today there is such a threat; it stems from the ever more pervasive processes of commodification and bureaucratization, from the increasing autonomy of economic and administrative subsystems which confront the life-world with imperatives of instrumental rationality, and thereby not only undermine traditional forms of life but impinge on the very communicative infrastructure of these spheres where men still have to act in concert.

I do not think though that we can succeed in analyzing the reification of the life-world, which is so visible today, unless we rely on a normative perspective originating from within it. In contrast to A. Schütz, H. Arendt did have such a perspective with the idea of an unimpaired intersubjectivity.

(3) H. Arendt did not finish the third part of her posthumous work on *The Life of Mind*. She intended to explain that faculty of *Urteilskraft* or judgement which she regarded as the core of rational orientations in the *Vita Activa*. H. Arendt wanted to elaborate the moral and the political implications of that specific "enlargement of mind" which according to Kant enable men to judge. It is accomplished by "comparing our judgement with the possible rather than the actual judgements of others, and putting ourselves in the place of any other man.... Critical thinking makes the others present and thus moves potentially in a space which is public, open to all sides."[2] This is a first approach to a concept of communicative rationality which is built into speech and action itself. From this point of view, Hannah Arendt's interpretation of Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* reminds us of the interpretation which George Herbert Mead has offered for Kant's *Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft*. Both converge in the project of an ethics of communication which connects practical

2. *Ibid.*, p. 257.

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reason to the idea of a universal discourse. It was the work of this same George Herbert Mead which, by the way, challenged Alfred Schütz, when he first came to the United States, to integrate the German heritage of Husserl and Max Weber with the great tradition of American Pragmatism. This gives me the occasion for a final remark. Last year, Hans Jonas published an important book on *Ethics in the Age of Technological Civilization*.[3] I was surprised to see that he had written this book in German, after so many books he had written in English. Jonas explains this decision in his foreword: to formulate the argument in his acquired language would have taken two or three times as much time. We have heard from Mary McCarthy that H. Arendt had similar hesitations until the very end. These facts are worth mentioning because they are only the reverse side of the medal; they give us an idea of those enormous efforts which went into inseminating thoughts of German origin into the objective mind of this country, thereby discovering deep affinities between both American and German philosophical traditions since Charles S. Peirce. In view of the admirable achievements, I would like to praise the New School for having been such a rare place of reciprocal fertilization, of the most intensive, most productive German-Jewish-American intellectual assimilation.

3. Hans Jonas, *Das Prinzip Verantwortung* (Frankfurt, 1979).

PHILOSOPHICAL SOURCES OF WITTGENSTEIN'S ETHICS

by Allan Janik

Levi's thesis that the peculiar — and in his estimation repugnant — character of Wittgenstein's ethics is best explained biographically as an expression of guilty homosexuality has drawn criticism from Rudebush and Berg on the ground that the evidence for Wittgenstein's alleged homosexuality is questionable but also from Steinvorth on the ground that guilty homosexuality is less than adequate as a response to the philosophical issues involved in a critique of Wittgenstein's ethical views.[1] Levi's critics have suggested interesting sociological alternatives to his psychoanalytic reductionism. One need not endorse the criticisms of Levi's position to realize that his critics' positions are clearly superior to his if for no other reason than that they do not entail unacceptable ontological commitments to an "unconscious" or such-like entity.[2] Yet, all of the parties to the *Telos* debate have ignored the central issue, i.e.,

1. Albert William Levi, "The Biographical Sources of Wittgenstein's Ethics," *Telos* 38 (Winter 1978-79), pp. 63-76. Cf. Thomas Rudebush and William M. Berg, "On Wittgenstein: A Reply to Levi" and Steven S. Schwarzschild, "Wittgenstein as Alienated Jew," *Telos* 40 (Summer 1979), pp. 150-160 and 160-165; also Ulrich Steinvorth, "The Ideological Sources of Wittgenstein's Ethics," *Telos* 41 (Fall 1979), pp. 166-172. For Levi's rejoinder to Rudebush and Berg and Schwarzschild, see Levi, "Wittgenstein Once More," *Telos* 40 (Summer 1979), pp. 165-173.

2. See A.C. MacIntyre, *The Unconscious: A Conceptual Study* (London and New York, 1958), especially pp. 71-73.

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they have not treated Wittgenstein's ethics as moral *philosophy*. To do this entails delving into the context of moral debate in which Wittgenstein was writing, and to explain how his ethical positions "follow" from his epistemological views.

Toulmin and I always considered our *Wittgenstein's Vienna* as a *preliminary* work meant to clear the ground for further research into the early Wittgenstein by providing an account of the *Tractatus* different from those of orthodox academic "analytic" philosophy. Thus, we sought to produce a "bold conjecture" about the *Tractatus* on the basis of historical considerations concerning Wittgenstein's intellectual and ethical preoccupations as they mirrored the social and cultural debates of the milieu from which he emerged. In short, we were setting forth tentative views which we hoped would contribute to the solution of some vexing problems concerning Wittgenstein's text rather than providing ultimate answers to the conundrums surrounding the early Wittgenstein. For this reason Toulmin and I remain less than pleased to see our work cited along with that of W.W. Bartley III, which appears to take a different attitude to these matters,[3] to form the basis for mere speculation about Wittgenstein. My aim will be to illustrate how Wittgenstein's ethical position, bizarre though it may seem, can be seen as a peculiar variation on an established moral theory. Before doing that, however, it will be necessary to clarify yet another misunderstanding of the approach to Wittgenstein that Toulmin and I took — a misunderstanding shared by Levi, among others.

At the close of the introductory chapter of *Wittgenstein's Vienna* we insisted that we were primarily preoccupied with Wittgenstein's *problems* rather than his *beliefs*. In an otherwise perceptive analysis of our book, Levi remarked that "It is by no means clear that so sharp a distinction between 'beliefs' and 'problems' need be drawn."[4] Since his failure to draw this distinction lies at the root of his fallacious approach to Wittgenstein's ethics, it will be worthwhile to spell out just why we insisted on such a seemingly pedantic point. When we spoke of Wittgenstein's problems we were referring to his intellectual problems and not to his personality. Inasmuch as we were concerned with his beliefs, we were concerned with them as sources of his philosophical preoccupations, i.e., as the source of his questions rather than as answers for them. Thus, our main preoccupation was with the "absolute presuppositions" upon which his intellectual enterprise was based. Our concern in establishing Wittgenstein's beliefs was in aid of elucidating his reasoning, his working logic, with a view to understanding his text as he wished it to be understood but by reference to the *public* (if unarticulated) criteria which might lead Wittgenstein to consider that a given problem, say, the relation between language and the world, to be the focus for resolving all of the problems of traditional philosophy. It was not that we found his personality *per se* philosophically interesting but that it was the key to Wittgenstein's absolute presuppositions about ethics, the world, the proposition, etc. It is not that we disagreed with Schwarzschild, who argues that Wittgenstein is the "quintessentially alienated" 20th-century intellectual,[5] but that we did not consider that this was what made Wittgenstein philosophically important. In our efforts, Wittgenstein's alleged homosexual guilt could at best be one necessary condition among myriads for explaining the subjective genesis of an attitude but, as Steinvorth has pointed out, it is "at best inadequate" for explaining what is of lasting interest and

3. See W.W. Bartley III, *Wittgenstein* (Philadelphia and New York, 1973), and my review of Bartley in *Modern Austrian Literature*, 8:3-4 (1975), pp. 402-404.

4. Levi, *"De Interpretatione:* Cognition and Context in the History of Ideas," *Critical Inquiry*, 3:1 (1976), p. 157.

5. Schwarzschild, *op.cit.*, p. 162.

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import in Wittgenstein's world view.

No aspect of Wittgenstein's conception of ethics is easily accessible. Yet, any discussion of his views must begin with an examination of the problems which arise in Wittgenstein's texts. None of his texts — least of all those concerned with ethics — is open to straightforward interpretation. They cannot be taken at face value because Wittgenstein's procedure is not the customary one of advancing theses on the basis of tightly knit arguments. This procedure is not a matter of mere personal stylistic idiosyncrasy, but something essential to his concept of philosophizing.

The two principal texts in which he dealt with the subject are the *Tractatus* and the "Lecture on Ethics," probably written in 1930. [6] To begin with, it is hardly a secret that Wittgenstein insists that there cannot be meaningful ethical statements. At the same time that he insists that they are "important nonsense" as opposed to mere formally self-contradictory gibberish. He insists that he has settled an issue that people have been mistakenly debating by showing how it is impossible to make significant utterances about ethical issues. His assumption is that there is a right and a wrong position on ethics but that neither can be legitimately discussed. Since people try to say the unsayable continually, it is clear that he is referring to a conceptual limitation on speech rather than to a physical or linguistic impossibility. None of his other claims should obscure this central issue. The task, then, is to find the philosophical background for such a position.

This much is clear already in the *Tractatus*: Wittgenstein does not designate as ethical anything but concern for "the meaning of life," "the sense of the world," "God," etc., i.e., he does *not* take questions about "the greatest good for the greatest number" or distributive justice to be ethical issues in the strict sense. The latter are merely questions of "relative value" in the language of the "Lecture," while the former involve ultimate questions of "absolute value." His ethical task is to make us see the world rightly. It is important to emphasize that Wittgenstein only endorses a fact-value dichotomy as it applies to "absolute values." In the "Lecture" he offers as synonymous with "absolute value" that which is "really important," that which bears upon the "right way of living," "what one ought to want," and even "the supernatural" in addition to the terms he had employed in the *Tractatus*. On the basis of the last of these, Levi and Steinvorth have taken Wittgenstein to endorse a "non-naturalist" ethics. Yet, it is crucial to point out that the doctrine of silent showing emphasizes that it is precisely such a "non-naturalist" ethics which is not available because of the limits of language. These terms merely express the normal and mistaken approach that people have made to questions of "absolute value." To assert that Wittgenstein was not a "naturalist" in ethics is to deny that he held a particular ethical *theory*. However, it is incorrect to conclude from that denial that he held a non-naturalist theory of ethics. In fact, it may lead to a position rejecting ethical theorizing altogether. In any case, what is at stake here is obscure and Wittgenstein's mode of expression is ambiguous. In the *Tractatus* he speaks of the ethical (the mystical, that concerning which we must remain silent, that which can only be shown) as "outside" (6.41) or "higher" (6.42) than what is the case (the world). These modes of expression have misled Levi to assert that the ethical is transcendent rather than transcendental, the latter being the Kantian term Wittgenstein actually chose to express himself on this point (6.421). [7] At

6. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (London and New York, 1963), preface and propositions 6.4 to 7; and "Lecture on Ethics," *Philosophical Review* 74 (1965), pp. 3-13. All references to the former will be parenthetical and to the respective proposition number. All references to the latter will also be parenthetical but to the respective page.

7. I agree with Steinvorth's criticisms of Levi on this point despite the fact that Steinvorth

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any rate, Wittgenstein does not assert that ethics is "sublime" in the "Lecture" but that it would be sublime "if there were such a science" (p. 7). His deepest conviction was that there could not be one.

On his own account in the "Lecture," the best that Wittgenstein himself could do was to summon deep personal experiences which helped him to fix the notion of absolute value in his mind and might serve a similar function for his listeners. He lists three such experiences: that of wonder at the existence of the world, the feeling of absolute safety and the feeling of guilt (pp. 8-9). For Levi, the latter is obviously a reference to Wittgenstein's guilty homosexuality. This is not so obvious to me. In fact, there is a good case to be made for the view that it is a less-than-obvious variation on a theme in Kantian ethics. This much is clear for Wittgenstein: this is an extremely powerful and profound feeling, one which tempts us to "run up against the limits of language," to endeavor to put the unexpressible into words. [8] Thus, for Wittgenstein our tendency to make statements about matters of absolute value is not a matter of confusion but a response to something deeply puzzling about the world. He seems to recognize something analogous to the "natural disposition" to transcend the bounds of sense which Kant posits in his *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics.*[9] For Wittgenstein as for Kant — and this sharply distinguished both from Hume and the Vienna Circle — there is something profoundly significant in our vain efforts to transcend the limits of language. Kant explicitly maintains that we can never hope to extinguish this disposition, while Wittgenstein assures us that we disregard it at our peril.

The fundamental assertion in the *Tractatus* is that we must rigorously demarcate those matters that can legitimately be discussed (i.e., those arguments that may possibly terminate in a proposition which is true) from those which cannot be put into words (i.e., those that cannot be formulated into a question whose answer will be a meaningful assertion). The latter set of issues includes ethics and aesthetics as well as meta-logic. Levi rightly suggests that Wittgenstein's route to this conclusion is less than clearly marked. However, this much is certain of Wittgenstein's views about the ethical in the *Tractatus:* the ethical is not a part of what can be said because it is inextricably bound up with the transcendental subject which is designated variously as the will (6.423, 6.43) or the metaphysical subject (5.633, 6.542), which is a limit or boundary of the world and incapable of affecting it. Wittgenstein believes that the happy person lives in a different world from the unhappy person despite the fact that the two worlds could be given *exactly* the same description (6.43). Acting ethically does not change anything in the world but only alters its boundaries. This activity is outside of space and time (6.4312). In contrast to the world it has a necessary relation to what is valuable in contrast to the world in which *everything* is accidental (6.41). Reward and

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also misrepresents the position that Toulmin and I took on the issue. This is somewhat surprising in the light of the letter that I sent Steinvorth in response to his paper, "Wittgensteins Philosophie der Philosophie: Eine Kritik der Wittgenstein-Interpretation in Janik und Toulmins *Wittgenstein's Vienna,*" presented to the Second International Wittgenstein Symposium, Kirchberg am Wechsel, 1977. There I admitted that our term "ethical sphere" invited the interpretation according to which Wittgenstein held to a quasi-Popperian Third World view of ethics, but denied that we intended to convey any other notion than that Wittgenstein believed ethics to be purely and simply a matter of action.

8. Wittgenstein, "Notes on Talks with Waismann," appended to the "Lecture," pp. 12-13. The full text of this passage will be found in Friedrich Waissmann, *Wittgenstein der Wiener Kreis,* ed. B.F. McGuinness (Oxford, 1967) under the rubric (deleted in the *Philosophical Review*) "Zu Heidegger," pp. 68-69.

9. Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena zu jeden künftigen Metaphysik die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können,* ed. Karl Vorländer (Hamburg, 1965), pp. (Prussian Academy) 362-365.

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punishment reside in the very act of behaving rightly and wrongly respectively; they are not, so to speak, superadded to the action (6.422). None of this is derivable from anything in the world nor can science even begin to penetrate the most humanly pressing problems (6.52). This is because the latter bear upon the boundary or limit, the very transcendental self, which makes science possible. The fundamental problems of ethics, then, are bound up with the self-awareness of how the transcendental self constructs, and therefore limits, the world. It cannot be put into words because it is logically prior to the act of picturing which constitutes the basis of all worldmaking; as such it has to be termed a mystical sense or feeling of the world as a bounded totality (6.45). Our problem, then, is to find a philosophical route to this view.

In his correspondence with Ludwig von Ficker, Wittgenstein suggests that we are able to relate to language in three ways, two of which he considers legitimate, the third of which is not. We can assert what is or is not the case; we can be silent about those transcendental issues that arise in ethics and logic, concerning which we can only show things by our mode of procedure; or we can babble about the things we ought to relegate to a pregnant silence.[10] Further, we know from his conversations with Waismann that Wittgenstein was prepared to take at least some forms of babbling very seriously indeed as efforts to "run up against the limits of language." Thus, he could admire classical metaphysicians such as Schopenhauer at the same time that he asserted their claims to be meaningless. On at least one occasion he identified his views about this admirable, if vain, tendency with those of Kierkegaard and Heidegger. Finally, in his efforts to find a publisher for the *Tractatus* as recounted in his letters to Ficker, his correspondence with G.E. Moore, and his conversations with G.H. von Wright, he considered Otto Weininger to be among those profound babblers.[11] By looking at certain aspects of Wininger's work, one can discover an ethical position that asserts the sorts of things about "absolute value" that Wittgenstein admires but insists are unsayable. The main lines of the *Tractatus* demarcating the sayable from the showable illustrate how Wittgenstein's position *may* be construed as a critique of Weininger's ethics. In short, Wittgenstein *presupposes* the validity of Weininger's ethical views in practice while he denies that these views can be put into words in the *Tractatus*.[12]

A brief summary of Weininger's philosophical position is difficult to provide due to the compressed and even convoluted nature of his writings. The following will merely

10. Wittgenstein, *Briefe an Ludwig von Ficker,* ed. G.H. von Wright and Walter Methlagl ("Brenner Studien" I: Salzburg, 1969), p. 35.

11. Wittgenstein, cited in K.T. Fann, *Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), p. 86. Cf. also Waismann, *Ludwig Wittgenstein, op.cit.*; Wittgenstein, *Ficker,* especially pp. 32-33; Wittgenstein, *Letters to Russell, Keynes and Moore,* ed. G.H. von Wright and B.F. McGuinness (Ithaca, N.Y., 1974), p. 159.

12. Incidentally, the following should be seen as a critique of *Wittgenstein's Vienna* for it is clear to me today, as it was not when we wrote the book, that Weininger represented the philosophical expression of the social and cultural criticism practiced by such figures as Karl Kraus and Arnold Schoenberg, both of whom acknowledged this and one of whom, Kraus, certainly influenced Wittgenstein when he conceived the *Tractatus.* I have attempted to document Wittgenstein's respect for Weininger and conjecture what influence this might have had upon Wittgenstein's philosophizing in "Wittgenstein and Weininger," *Wittgenstein and his Impact upon Contemporary Thought: Proceedings of the Second International Wittgenstein Symposium,* ed. E. Leinfellner *et al.* (Vienna, 1978), pp. 25-30. On their relation to Weininger, see for example Karl Kraus, *Beim Wort Genommen* (Munich, 1955), pp. 55-56; Arnold Schoenberg, *Harmonie-lehre* (Leipzig and Vienna, 1911), p. vi. On Wittgenstein's relationship to Kraus during the crucial period when he was excogitating the *Tractatus* see Paul Englemann, *Letters from Wittgenstein with a Memoir,* trans. L. Furtmüller, ed. B.F. McGuinness (Oxford, 1967), pp. 123-127.

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outline certain of his key notions as they form the link between his version of Kantianism and Wittgenstein's ethics. Weininger's main work, *Sex and Character,*[13] centers on an almost Baroque argument integrating social criticism, a critique of contemporary psychological theories, a theory of heredity and an aesthetic theory into an account of moral behavior which culminates in an account of rational action based upon respect for the concrete human person. Like the author of the *Tractatus*, Weininger is committed to an ontological monism which rests, paradoxically, upon an epistemological dualism. With Boltzmann and Kant — and against the materialist monism of Haeckel and the dual aspect theories of Avenarius and Mach — Weininger insisted that knowledge was not merely an accumulation and recording of sense data but a process of investigation resembling a judicial proceeding in that answers to our inquiries into Nature were only possible because we have first formulated our questions according to rational schemata, which we have constructed on the basis of formal logic for that purpose. For Weininger, scientific knowledge is differentiated from a mere aggregate of empirical data by virtue of the fact that it is based upon ideal types, constructed from the empirically given on the basis of logic, which are limiting cases and thus allow us to differentiate the typical from the anomalous. The concepts that we construct insure that our observations and experiments have direction but also provide us with criteria for determining whether we have been successful or not. Knowledge in the strict sense, then, is limited by what is observable but also by the observer, for there is no genuine observation without an observer to construct an ideal type nor is there really an observer for Weininger except as he pays rigorous attention to the empirically given. As we shall see, Weininger conceives this as a moral as well as an epistemological position. Like the positivists he criticizes, Weininger does not believe that there are unobservable entities; however, unlike them, he insists that the "constituted" nature of knowing implies that knowledge has definite limits. The knower cannot both construct the known and know itself simultaneously. Indeed, the notion of a mind that is active in the noetic act sets the limits to what can be known. Knowledge and self-knowledge, the respective objects of science and philosophy, are thus radically demarcated as possibly mutually incompatible pursuits. We are only scientific knowers inasmuch as we know something but this is to know something definite about the world and this cannot be mind, i.e., the condition upon which the world depends for its very being. Weininger, like Kant before him, aims at undermining substantive metaphysical theories but, unlike Kant, he considers that the chief danger he confronts is presented by the positivist materialism of classical liberalism with its wildly optimistic conviction that science can resolve all the "riddles of the universe."[14] For Weininger this is not only an erroneous theory, it is positively

13. Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter* (Vienna and Leipzig, 1903, with numerous reprintings); translations from this work are my modification of the authorized but faulty translation published by Putnam's in 1906. The translator is not named. A new translation of selections from Weininger is being planned by B.F. McGuinness and Barry Smith.

14. One of the liveliest controversies in latter 19th-century German scientific circles was occasioned by Emil du Bois-Reymond's assertion that certain types of questions would never be answered. These "riddles of the Universe" included the nature of consciousness, the freedom of the will, the ultimate nature of matter, etc. To these questions Du Bois-Reymond insisted we can only respond *ignoramus et ignorabimus*. He took this to signify that science should occupy itself with only those questions which it could reasonably hope to answer. Ernst Haeckel took issue with this position and asserted to the contrary that science soon would be in a position where it could foresee the resolution of all such riddles once the last vestiges of religious superstition, i.e., philosophical dualism, were expunged and science discovered the single basic element from

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immoral. In fact, Weininger is best approached, as his friend, the philosopher Emil Lucka rightly insists, as providing us with an account of the problem of dualism.[15] To understand how he arrived at this position we shall have to sketch Weininger's view of the Categorical Imperative.

Weininger's ethical theory can be described as a strict interpretation of the Categorical Imperative but with his own peculiar twist. Weininger proceeds from the version of the Categorical Imperative we find in Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* rather than the versions we find in the ethical writings. Thus, Weininger reads the Categorical Imperative primarily as stipulating courses of action rather than as a decision procedure for establishing the rationality of moral rules.[16] For Weininger, then, the moral man is he who treats personality in himself and in others as an end in itself and not merely as a means. No further considerations may enter into moral activity. It is important for Weininger (and here he departs from Kant's view) that each and every human being, simply by virtue of the fact that he is both embodied and a rational agent, is the focus of conflict between rational duty and sensual inclination. This is the ethical side of Weininger's bizarre theory of human bisexuality, which identifies the Masculine with the Ideal Type of rational conduct and the Feminine with the Ideal Type of non-rational conduct (i.e., more or less with what Kant terms the "radical evil" in human nature).[17] Since his theory of human nature is predicated upon a universal bisexuality, there will be a sense for Weininger in which every human being is "guilty," which will correspond to the extent to which our inclinations have not yet been brought under the control of reason. It would not be inappropriate to term the human situation as perceived by Weininger as characterized by "metaphysical guilt" as, say, Karl Jaspers does,[18] although Weininger does not employ this term in his own writings. Nevertheless, even a cursory reading of *Geschlecht und Charakter* seems to justify such a reading of his main thesis. It is not my task to defend Weininger here but simply to state the sum and substance of that position. Briefly, Weininger sees our situation as moral agents as exactly parallel to our situation as knowing subjects, at least in the crucial respect that the moral agent constructs a self (by which term Weininger explicitly does not intend any ontological connotation but strictly a moral one) through consistently acting in conformity with the Kantian principle of personality. It is important to emphasize that Weininger, like Kant, takes his position to be wholly in accord with the traditional injunction to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Since Weininger's ethical theory is largely an account of why we find this nearly impossible and since his views about why this should be the case are unusual to say the least, it will be worthwhile to spell them out in more detail.

Perhaps Weininger's most radical claim is that there are some human beings who are physiologically and psychologically incapable of moral action. He identifies these with the Type Woman, though not necessarily with existing individual women (in

which everything in the universe was constituted. Weininger's Kantianism appears to be a rejoinder to Haeckel. Wittgenstein's rejection of philosophical monism *and* dualism (4. 128) and his assertion that the riddle does not exist (6.5) are probably intended as the last word in this heated debate. See Emil Du Bois-Reymand, *Ueber die Grenzen des Naturerkennens* (Leipzig, 1872); Ernst Haeckel, *Die Welträtsel* (Leipzig, 1899) and Haeckel, *Monism,* trans. J.C. Gilchrist (London, 1894). Daniel Gasman's *The Scientific Origins of National Socialism* (London, 1971) places Haeckel in the cultural and social context of the Second Reich.

15. Emil Lucka, *Otto Weininger* (Vienna and Leipzig, 1905).

16. Immanuel Kant, *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft,* in *Kant's Werke* VI (Prussian Academy Edition, Berlin, 1907), p. 160.

17. Kant, *Religion, ibid.,* pp. 32-39.

18. Karl Jaspers, *Die Schuldfrage* (Zürich, 1946), p. 11.

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approaching the bizarre things that Weininger says about the Ideal Type Woman it is necessary continually to bear in mind that he considers all actual individuals to be physiologically, psychologically and morally *bisexual* in *varying* degrees). In this assumption he follows Schopenhauser rather than Kant and, indeed, Weininger sees himself as carrying through a program initiated by the great pessimist.[19] As a biologist he is concerned to identify the medium through which our sexuality is transmitted and in fact he comes up with an extremely curious but, given the state of biological science circa 1903, not altogether impossible, account of heredity. His problem is that, like the modern sociobiologists (to whom his approach to science and ethics is otherwise entirely opposed), his chief failing is that he assumes that we know far more about the relation between heredity and human behavior than we actually do. As a psychologist Weininger is concerned to characterize the world views that his heredity theory makes possible. However, his ultimate aim is to articulate the dualism present in Kantian epistemology in all its complexity with a view to exposing the interpenetration of not only moral and epistemological, but also psychological and plasmic, opposites in the concrete existing individual. This interpenetration imbues everything Weininger asserts with a profoundly paradoxical and dialectical quality.

The following passage encapsulates the mystical and almost religious sense of awe that he finds implicit in Kantian dualism: "My investigation is now on the threshold of what cannot be investigated; of a problem that so far no one has dared to answer that will never be answered by any human being. It is the riddle of the universe and of life; the binding of the unlimited in the bonds of space, of the eternal in time, of the spirit in matter. It is the relation of freedom to necessity, of something to nothingness, of God to the devil. The dualism of the world is beyond comprehension; it is the plot of the story of man's fall, the primal riddle."[20] While Weininger is not explicitly discussing the relation between the self and what it knows and does, it is more than clear from the text of *Geschlecht und Charakter* that the unfathomable mystery which surrounds "the dualism of the world" and permeates its ethical and epistemological character is the result of the peculiar relation between the self and the world. It is the mystery of the self constructing the world and itself on the basis of *logic*. Indeed, logic is the linchpin in Weininger's *Weltanschauung*. This, of course, is not surprising from a Kantian for no one insists that logic is the foundation for knowing and acting more than Kant. However, Weininger manages to give his own twist to the traditional Kantian position inasmuch as he comes to equate logic and ethics: "Logic and ethics are fundamentally the same, they are no more than duty to oneself.... All ethics is possible only by the laws of logic, all logic is also ethical law. Not only virtue but also insight, not only sanctity but also wisdom is the task of men."[21] On this account it is hardly difficult to grasp why Weininger could, with Descartes, identify all error, both intellectual and moral, as essentially criminal.

Weininger developed his antithesis between the criminal and the moral man in terms of their relation to the conceptual limits which constrain action, i.e., on that Kantian account of rational action which Weininger unquestioningly assumes is the sole legitimate one. In a passage which Wittgenstein is known to have admired, Weininger differentiates the good from the evil man by virtue of the fact that the former has the "will to value," i.e., he does not behave agressively nor does he rest

19. Arthur Schopenhauer, "Metaphysik der Geschlechtsliebe," *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (*Erganzungen*) in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Julius Fräunstädt (Leipzig, 1891), vol. III, pp. 607-650.
20. Weininger, *Geschlecht, op.cit.*, p. 374.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

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upon his laurels. This is the exact opposite of the criminal, the center of whose life is manipulation for the sake of pleasure: "he wants to *force* things and, therefore, also to know. The conception that something should be impossible for him contradicts his spirit of absolute functionalism, which wants to join himself to everything and everything to himself. Thus, the conception of boundaries and limits (even of knowledge) is intolerable to him."[22] For Weininger, as for Kant, the lie incorporates the main elements of immoral behavior because it is a refusal to admit how things are in the world and an attempt to manipulate the other. At a theoretical level the utilitarianism of a Spencer, with its emphasis on social engineering, and the positivist epistemology of a Mach, with its refusal to admit limits to knowledge, incorporate tendencies which are nothing less than criminal in Weininger's eyes.[23] Like Don Giovanni, the criminal is concerned solely with immediate gratification through control of others. In the intellectual sphere the Comtean triology *savoir pour prevoir pour pouvoir* is the counterpart of Don Giovanni's egocentrism. Unlike the genius who is constantly aware of how short he falls from the ideal and, consequently, is silently self-effacing, the immodesty of the criminal — and the positivist — knows no bounds. The criminal can never relate to another as an equal but always as master or servant for his most cherished belief is in causality, which makes him, paradoxically, both an egoist and a fatalist. It is important to emphasize once again that this tendency is part and parcel of human nature and, thus, present in each and every one of us (with the exception of the rare individuals who have managed to conquer their instincts). According to Weininger, then, human beings are located along a moral spectrum characterized by three ideal types whose characteristics will be found in nearly all individuals: the Kantian moral man or genius, which is identified with the Type Male, the instinctual non-rational individual who cannot control his actions, whom he identifies with the Type Woman, and finally, that person who is capable of moral autonomy but has not chosen it, whom Weininger, following H.S. Chamberlain, identifies with the Type Jew. It is important to emphasize that Weininger explicitly denies that he is committed to biological racism. On the contrary, he insists that by the Jew he is referring to a moral type, i.e., that person who takes his values unquestioningly from those around him and is not yet moral in the requisite Kantian sense.

Weininger clearly recognized that he was running around the rim of hell in advancing such a theory, i.e., that he would almost certainly be misunderstood. Thus, in his preface to his book he wrote, "Horror at my own deed would overtake me were I only destructive here.... Perhaps the affirmations in my book are less than articulate but he that has ears to hear will hear them."[24] Weininger believed that his theory of sexual differentiation obliged him to oppose women's suffrage but he did advocate legal reforms otherwise. For example, it follows from his theory that prostitutes and homosexuals should not be taken to be committing criminal acts. This is because their constitution is physiologically determined (a position widely held by turn-of-the-century social reformers who otherwise were strongly opposed to Weininger).[25] "No

22. Weininger, *Ueber die letzten Dinge* (Vienna and Leipzig, 1904), p. 119.

23. For a critique of Mach closely resembling Weininger's ethical critique of positivism but from a more orthodox defense of the primacy of practical reason, see Emil Lucka, "Das Erkenntnisproblem und Machs Analyse der Empfindigungen," *Kant-Studien* 8 (1903), pp. 396-447.

24. Weininger, *Geschlecht, op.cit.*, p. x.

25. This was, for example, the position of the Wissenschaftlich-Humanitären Committee of Magnus Hirschfeld, which labored for the repeal of the German anti-homosexual law, an organization far removed from Weininger otherwise. See Numa Praetorius, review of *Geschlecht*

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one," he wrote, "has the right to denounce or defame woman, however inferior she must be considered." [26] We are so accustomed to associating the notion of "constitutional inferiority" with the insane brutalities of the "Final Solution" that it is extremely difficult today to perceive a humanitarian face behind such a position. Yet, Weininger not only was such a humanist but advanced good reasons for assuming a benevolent attitude to those whom he considered inferior. Basically, he takes it to follow from his Kantian assumptions that we become persons only to the extent that we acknowledge personality in the other. To fail to do so is to brutalize *oneself*: "If there is no 'Thou,' there is certainly no 'I' and that would mean there is nothing." [27] This comes to the very ethical core of his world view. Weininger is aiming not at establishing a new value system, but a transition from theory to practice in ethics: "most men theoretically respect women but practically despise them, according to my ideas this method should be reversed." [28] Morality, in effect, should be a matter of what we do rather than what we say about our actions. Unless I am mistaken, Wittgenstein endeavored to live up to this ideal personality and to establish the priority of moral action over ethical theorizing in his *Tractatus*.

From the foregoing, it ought to be clear that a Weiningerian could view ethics as intrinsically bound to wonder at the existence of the world and also to a sense of guilt without necessarily being a "guilty homosexual" — though the latter is by no means incompatible with Weininger's view that *all* sexual activity is essentially immoral by virtue of the fact that sex always entails using a person as a mere means. [29] Nor is the "guilty homosexual" thesis incompatible with anything I have alleged about Wittgenstein's ethical and intellectual preoccupations. It is simply that such a thesis is philosophically uninteresting. Three issues concerning Wittgenstein's ethics remain to round out the picture I have been drawing: (1) how Wittgenstein might come to the position that this Weiningerian account could not be put into words; (2) how he would come to associate the ethical with a feeling of absolute safety; and (3) the philosophical status of the "personal reflections" in the "Lecture" which are the key to understanding ethics for him. Answering these questions will involve making a case for the view that ethics is not only transcendental as Weininger maintained, but also inexpressible. To do this it will be necessary to reconsider Wittgenstein's general objections to meta-level theorizing in logic with a view to discovering precisely how these considerations might lead him to reformulate Weininger's ethical position as profound nonsense of a sort that can only be shown rather than put into words.

It is hardly esoteric wisdom that Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* aims at demarcating the sphere of the sayable on the basis of the logic of language; it is less often emphasized that the thrust of Wittgenstein's theory of logic rests upon its application to the world (i.e., "picturing"). For Wittgenstein we come to what logic is only when we proceed from a consideration of what we do with it. The whole epistemological message of the *Tractatus* centers on the assumption that linguistic practice as opposed to foundational speculation is the key to the proper understanding of thinking and knowing. Wittgenstein takes foundational speculation, especially that of Russell, to be based upon dubious Third Man arguments. Thus, his attitude to Frege's assertion sign, Russell's theory of types and the Axiom of Infinity are governed by such considerations. It is hardly ever pointed out that all of these moves involve the use of

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und Charakter, Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen 6 (1904), pp. 520-521.

26. Weininger, *Geschlecht, op.cit.*, p. 336.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 339.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 448.

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metalanguages and, more importantly, that Wittgenstein's objection to metalanguages rests on the notion that they are conceptually impossible. In the crucial text in question, Wittgenstein asserts, "There cannot be a hierarchy of forms of elementary propositions. We can only foresee what we construct ourselves"(5.556). Contrary to the standard view that takes Wittgenstein's position to be the result of some personal quirk or the fact that a rigorously developed metalanguage did not exist at the time he wrote, it is Wittgenstein's constructivism which leads him to this conclusion. There cannot be a language about language, not because we cannot make assertions about language, but because our alleged metalanguage is limited by the self which constructs it in *exactly* the same way as a so-called object language is so limited. This is to say that a metalanguage can never stand in a hierarchical relation to the world such that it could elucidate fundamental problems about the nature of the world. This follows from a Weiningerian-Kantian metaphysical position.

David Pears has pointed out that Wittgenstein's position in the *Tractatus* depends on two things: (1) the determinacy of the sense of propositions (Russell's Theory of Descriptions) and (2) the notion that a proposition has an isomorphic relation to what it depicts.[30] The corollary of the latter is the notion that all propositions are bi-polar, i.e., that by affirming one state of affairs a proposition denies all other concatenations of the same set of referents. Truth tables are a mode of representing propositions such that those which can be meaningful can be distinguished, at a glance as it were, from those that are not. Further, they facilitate distinguishing those propositions that can be substantively meaningful from those that represent grammatical statements, true under all conditions, which permit us to link our substantive propositions together. However, as Kenny has pointed out, truth tables do more than this; they also show us with crystal clarity that no proposition of logic is in any sense "prior" to any of the others.[31] This amounts to a refutation of the Aristotelian notion that there are "Laws of Thought" or the Fregean notion that there is a hierarchical order of axioms. Truth tables simply show that all tautologies have the same defining characteristics in much the same way that the Theory of Descriptions shows that any meaningful statement must be true or false. Effectively, the notion that all propositions have a determinate sense establishes that all true propositions can be divided into scientific statements and the propositions of formal logic. One of Wittgenstein's principal achievements in the *Tractatus* was to show that within these two realms no proposition had an ontological status above any of the others.

Before turning to examine the implications of these ideas for Weininger's thought and how they may have led Wittgenstein to the position he holds in the "Lecture," one further point relevant to the *Telos* debate ought to be made. In Wittgenstein's view, logical analysis aims at making our own linguistic practices clear to us. It is not that he advocates an ideal language to replace the vernacular, as Steinvorth asserts,[32] for, in fact, "all the propositions of our everyday language just as they stand are in perfect logical order" (5.5563). It is not our usage that Wittgenstein wishes to challenge but our accounts of the nature of that usage for this is where we are tempted to run up against the limits of language. Wittgenstein admired Russell's achievements more because Russell showed how it was that logical analysis could arrive at the depth grammar of misleadingly complex statements that sometimes pose as simple assertions than because Russell made a contribution to the development of an "ideal" language. Briefly, he saw Russell as assisting us in our efforts to attain self-knowledge rather than

30. David Pears, *Wittgenstein* (London, 1971), pp. 58-61.
31. Anthony Kenny, *Wittgenstein* (Harmondsworth, 1973), p. 33.
32. Steinvorth, *op.cit.*, p. 167.

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as a theorist in linguistics or in the foundations of mathematics.

In the "Lecture," Wittgenstein's reasoning about ethical issues is somewhat more clearly spelled out than it is in the *Tractatus*. Yet, in his view is wholly consistent with and derived from the views I have just adumbrated. Thus, the proposition, "I wonder at the existence of the world," is nonsense because it cannot depict a state of affairs that can possibly be false. We know from the *Tractatus* that any substantive statement must be bi-polar; I must be able to imagine that it is false. However, the very act of imagining entails imagining something. It is impossible to imagine nothing. Further, it is clear that this proposition is not a tautology for a tautology simply displays its vacuousness on a truth table. Similarly, in the "Lecture," Wittgenstein identifies the notion of absolute value with an expression of a fact possessing a different ontological status from all others inasmuch as it would establish an ultimate order of priorities. This, as we have seen, can be shown to be nonsense merely by Wittgenstein's mode of representation. Further, that same theory of descriptions which stipulates that substantive truth be linked to analytical complexity, implies that any proposition about the world as a whole could not possess determinate sense and would on that account be a pseudo-proposition. Hence, the whole of Wittgenstein's position in the "Lecture" can be seen as based upon the same sort of reasoning which led Russell to assert that the statement, "The King of France is bald," is meaningless. So much for Wittgenstein's reasoning, it remains to see how it affects a Weiningerian view of ethics.

"If a man could write a book on ethics which really was a book on Ethics," Wittgenstein wrote in the "Lecture," "This book would, with an explosion, destroy all other books in the World" (p. 7). In *Sex and Character* Weininger seems to have had just such aims. The Categorical Imperative, as Weininger interprets it, is certainly a statement about absolute value and the meaning of life with implications about man's ontological guilt (and possibly even implying a sense of absolute safety on the part of the moral person). If I am right, this theory stands to the ethics of the *Tractatus* in exactly a parallel relation to Russell's and Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica.* Ethics, like logic, has to take care of itself in that there can be no foundation for it because the foundation would have to be outside of the world. Just as the application of logic must clarify its basic conceptual difficulties in the *Tractatus,* i.e., once we have managed to get clear about the nature of the proposition by the truth table method of representing its structure, so once we have shown that there cannot be propositions about the world as a whole — though we can show things about it — ethical behavior must clarify the kinds of questions people have traditionally sought from moral philosophy. In short, none of the things that led Wittgenstein to reject Weininger's ethical theory in the least militates against living in the manner Weininger urged us to and, indeed, there are grounds for suspecting that the inexpressible nature of ethics on Wittgenstein's account may well be a good reason for doing so. There is little doubt that Wittgenstein was personally entirely in accord with Weininger's injunction that ethics should cease to be merely a matter of theory and become a matter of practice. The *Tractatus* urges precisely the same conclusion from a different direction. Thus, Wittgenstein's concern with drawing the limits of the sayable (including those in the *Philosophical Investigations*) may be construed as a continuation of the Weiningerian approach to ethics. To come to understand the *Tractatus* from this perspective will be to consider it as part of a Weiningerian spiritual practice and to make some progress in understanding how that practice may lead one to a sense of absolute safety.

This extremely difficult and obscure point becomes clearer if we examine Wittgenstein's views about the difference between the world of the happy and the

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unhappy man in light of Weininger's antithesis between the moral man and the criminal. Toward the end of the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein wrote, "The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man" (6.43). It is clear from the surrounding passages that this difference does not consist in there being anything factually diverse in these two "worlds": "If good or bad exercise of the Will does alter the world, it can alter only the limits of the world, not the facts — not what can be expressed by means of language" (6.43). On the basis of Weininger I take this to read that the unhappy man (the Weiningerian criminal who refuses to recognize limits to thought or action) is the person who regards all action in terms of some external reward or punishment (cf. 6.422). He is obsessed with possession and assumes a manipulative attitude to the whole universe. It might be objected here that such a person might possibly be immoral but that he need not on that account be unhappy. I take Wittgenstein's point to be such that a person has not understood the real meaning of the term happy. Like Plato, who compared the man who lives only for gratification with a person who tries to collect water with a sieve, Wittgenstein is actually asserting that the main reason for people becoming unhappy is that they mistakenly identify happiness with external objects rather than with a state of self-awareness, which, when achieved, guarantees happiness precisely because it is not something that can be taken away from one. To realize this would be to know that one could not possibly be harmed. If this view of the ethics of the *Tractatus* is correct, we can begin to see why Tolstoi's *Twenty-three Tales* would have come to have had such an enormous importance for Wittgenstein.[33] These stories emphasize the evil of greed as in "How Much Land Does a Man Need" and the folly of conventional worldly wisdom as in "Ivan the Fool" in their efforts to move us to reconsider our priorities.

My approach to Wittgenstein's understanding of the "absolute safety" attendant upon seeing the world rightly has been strongly influenced by Peter Winch's essay, "Can a Good Man Be Harmed?"[34] which treats, among other things, the question of making sense of Wittgenstein's notion that ethics is about a feeling of absolute safety. The merit of Winch's argument is not merely to have located Wittgenstein's thinking about these matters into their proper Platonic and Kierkegaardian context (in which Wittgenstein's point is taken to be about the "grammar" of "happy") but also to have cast light upon the notion that this is essentially inexpressible. It is worth citing Winch at length on this point: "A man who is patient in Kierkegaard's sense still thinks that *something* could harm him, namely, for him to cease to 'will the Good'; and it is clear that this *may* befall him as a result of afflictions which he has to suffer. Thus, if he says 'nothing can harm me,' there *is* still a predictive element in what he says; so his is not entitled to add 'whatever happens' and if he cannot do this, then his utterance does not have the absolute character it was intended to have."[35] If this view is correct, happiness, the feeling of absolute safety, reward and harm are all bound to perceiving the world rightly in silence. Further, we can get a glimpse of how Wittgenstein's paradoxical assertion that there are topics concerning which we must remain silent could be a contribution to a certain traditional ethical problem.

Three final points remain to be made about Wittgenstein's ethics. First, it could be objected that my treatment of the subject is no less speculative than Levi's. My reply is that this is true. Given the imperfect state of our knowledge of Wittgenstein's texts and

33. Norman Malcolm, *Ludwig Wittgenstein* (London, 1958), p. 52. Eugene Hargrove informs me that Wittgenstein was known to carry copies of the Reclam paperback edition of the Tolstoy tales for distribution among his friends in the 1920s.

34. Peter Winch, *Ethics and Action* (London, 1972), chapter 10, pp. 193-209.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 207.

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his biography, any investigation into these matters must be speculative. However, the point is that it ought to be philosophically speculative.

Second, it might be objected that I have given Wittgenstein's personal experience a philosophical status that he would not acknowledge. I have done this because I think that he is forced into this position by his peculiar version of constructivist epistemology. Indeed, the burden of my argument has been to show that the position that he took in the "Lecture" is anything but personal, if by that term we understand arbitrary. Rather, they are the only kinds of issues that can assist us in gaining his perspective on ethics. In this, his thought shares striking similarities with the existentialism of Karl Jaspers.[36] In Jaspers, the self finds itself surrounded by a reality that it cannot encompass because it too is part of that reality. The result is that there can be no objective account of "the sense of the world." We come to understand the meaning of life as we encounter the limit of the world. Thus, Jaspers speaks of "limit situations," our responses to which issue in the creation of subjective symbolisms that come to encapsulate our most intimate experiences in a less than communicable way. Jaspers terms these subjective symbols "cyphers." One of the tasks of the philosopher on Jaspers' account is to learn to read such cyphers. This has to a great extent been the nature of my preoccupation with Wittgenstein's ethics here — though I hope to have made it reasonably clear that Wittgenstein's cyphers are less subjective than they may seem at first glance.

My final point is that, if what I have been suggesting about Wittgenstein's dependence on Weininger is correct, the similarities I have noted to Jaspers' thought are hardly accidental and provide us with an extremely important clue for further researches into Wittgenstein's intellectual heritage. If Wittgenstein is as Weiningerian as I claim, he, like Jaspers and also Lukacs, Heidegger and Berdyaev to name but a few, is developing certain Kantian themes concerning the relation between subject and object, the primacy of the moral over the epistemological and the notion of totality which are characteristic of the Southwest German School.[37] If this is right, we shall only really be in a position to access the import of Wittgenstein's ethics when we have a precise account of the nature of the "family resemblances" between these thinkers. Whether or not this proves to be the case remains to be seen; however, this much is clear: Wittgenstein's alleged "guilty homosexuality" is at best a footnote to a philosophical discussion of his ethical views.

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36. For a convenient summary of Jaspers' approach to philosophy see his *Way to Wisdom*, trans. Ralph Mannheim (New Haven and London, 1954).

36. Lucka, in what is the most philosophically interesting book about Weininger, approaches him from this perspective. *Op.cit.*, pp. 8ff. Richard Kroner's *Kant's Weltanschauung*, trans. John Smith (Chicago, 1956) is perhaps the most easily accessible account of the view of Kant to which I am referring. Kroner was a major influence on Berdyaev's mature thought. Lucien Goldmann's *Lukacs et Heidegger* (Paris, 1973) emphasizes the common heritage of the two figures his study focuses upon in the South West German School, chapter 1, "Introduction à Lukacs et Heidegger," pp. 57-88.

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INTERPRETING SARTRE: A RESPONSE TO COLLINS

by Dominick La Capra

Let me begin by using Sartrean terms and concepts close to Collins' heart. An "honest" review or a review "in good faith" should do at least two things. First, it should state the announced project or the author's intention. Second, it should evaluate the project in light of pertinent alternatives, and it should inquire into the extent to which the author's project has been carried out. Collins' approach is different. Without evaluating my announced project, he falsely ascribes to me something I did not intend and then judges the book primarily in terms of whether or not it fulfills that. On the basis of the review, one might infer that the project falsely attributed to me is itself projective in that it is Collins' own real or imagined one, i.e., that he is actually or in fantasy writing the book he thinks I tried to write. I hope that his project is a real one because — in spite of the fact that related projects have already been accomplished — it is well worth undertaking. But it is not the project taken up in my book.

Collins' approach is facilitated by his misinterpretation of two notions employed in my book: confrontation and introduction. By a confrontation between Sartre and his French critics, Collins means (and apparently thinks I mean) an extended comparison describing how the thought of Sartre's critics either resembles or differs from Sartre's own and an attendant evaluation of what Collins takes to be their (or even my) putative claim to have transcended Sartre. This reveals a complete misunderstanding of the nature of the confrontation I tried to provoke, for it not only identifies it with extended descriptive comparison and appended critical judgments but it sees it as culminating in a simple choice between Sartre and his critics, notably Derrida. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Indeed, Collins often works with the crude assumption that a critique must lead to the clear-cut decision to accept or to reject and that all criticism is hostile. These views are very distant from the notion of critique I was employing. In fact, the point of the "critical introduction" I tried to write was to renew interest in Sartre.

The hazards of summary portraits of Derrida's thought are amply illustrated by Collins' review, and he is misleading enough to attribute his own bowdlerizations to me. As he puts it: "There is far more to Derrida than this brutal account would suggest, but these are the components of his program that play the most active role in LaCapra's reading of Sartre." Among these putative components are views that I explicitly criticize. For example: "every work is its own model and each text must be understood in its pure difference." By marked contrast, I take extreme pains to explicate the model of repetition I am using and attempt to show how texts from different genres should be read together and how they may be related to one another in terms of displacement (repetition with variation) and contestation. Frankly, I am amazed that someone could read the book and not come away with the realization that I am following an "intertextual" approach that tries to relate texts both to one another and to pertinent contexts in terms of an interplay of continuities and discontinuities. Collins also attributes the following supposedly "Derridian" view to me: "Criticism is an exercise in the glorification of the uninhibited production of meaning and self-transcendence." One may find this view at times in Barthes or in

1. Cf. Douglas Collins review of Dominick LaCapra, *A Preface to Sartre* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1978), in *Telos*, no. 40 (Summer 1979), pp. 198-202.

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Kristeva, but I do not agree with it. In fact, I criticize Sartre for not exploring the complex relations between tradition and criticism, for the quoted view could be ascribed to him: Instead, I try to indicate that the most fruitful dimension of Derrida is to be found in his exploration of the tense interaction between tradition and critique and that the "Nietzschean affirmation of the play of the world" involves the interaction of structure and play. Toward the end of the book, I try to discuss in an admittedly brief and inadequate way how "deconstruction" may be related to reconstruction and renewal which involves the transformation (and not the simple rejection) of tradition. Once again, as Collins puts it: "The structure of a work can be revealed only on the condition that we have discovered its unconditionally unavailable meaning or ultimate cause." This statement seems to me to make no sense. In any case, the statements I have quoted suggest the nature of Collins' "brutal account" of Derrida which he falsely ascribes to me.

The notion of confrontation I employed involved not extended comparison with appended critical evaluations but an active and critical *use* of Derrida in a reading or interpretation of Sartre. The use I make of Derrida's strategies may be open to question and to criticism, but I do not think that Collins even approaches this problem. In addition, the "curious" nature of the critical introduction I tried to write should have served as an obvious signal that it was not an introduction in the ordinary sense. It is related to the parodic and double sense of "preface" in the title, and certain footnotes try to show where Derrida renders the notion of a "preface" problematic. The title and subtitle of the book indicate that the book is itself involved in a tense interaction between an introduction of Sartre's writings to those "incompletely familiar" with them and a critical analysis of interest to those with a relatively advanced knowledge of them — groups, by the way, that are in no sense mutually exclusive. This mediative and supplementary position is the fruitfully paradoxical one I argue intellectual history should assume. (The entire problem of rethinking the way intellectual history is done is central to the book but Collins fails even to mention it.) Moreover, the style in which I try to write the book is that of the Menippean satire, and both the use of language and the relation to Sartre in it should be seen in this light. In this sense, the language can be both ironic and serious and the relation to Sartre both contestatory and rehabilitating. Again, there are numerous signals that this is what the book is trying to effect, e.g., the references to the work of Mikhail Bakhtin. One may well argue that the book fails to succeed in this "project" or even that it falls flat, but one should evaluate the book with some awareness that this attempt is being made.

Perhaps the most decisive difference between Collins' and my own approach to Sartre concerns the problems of transparency, alienation, and utopia. He notes Foucault's distinction between "two traditions of transparency": the Benthamite "all-seeing gaze of power" and the Rousseauistic dream of a communitarian world of mutual transparency and direct communication beyond relations of power. He accuses me of not seeing that Sartre is closer to Rousseau than to Bentham.

I shall return to the problems of transparency, alienation, and utopias, for I think they bear upon the reason why Collins is willing to concede to my book certain qualities in treating the early or literary (less serious?) Sartre ("LaCapra's pages are certainly among the best that have been written on *Nausea*") but must insist that the later Marxist Sartre of the *Critique* and *L'Idiot* is on the side of the angels. For one purpose of my book is to argue that some of Sartre's most radical texts are among his earlier and-or literary ones (*Nausea, The Words, Being and Nothingness*) and that his later Marxist works are at least dubious with respect to their own radical intentions. Indeed the thing that disturbed me most about Collins' review was its master-

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fully dogmatic and apodictic tone, for it at times passed judgment in a way that indicated that no "honest" difference of view could exist on rather complex matters of interpretation. By contrast, I think that as discourse becomes more complex, the room for argument "in good faith" becomes greater and the possibility that differences stem from simple errors or injustices becomes smaller. It is a seeming paradox that theoretical discourse about complex problems gives rise to some of the most dogmatic styles of pronouncement, at times because one believes (falsely, I think) that all issues are amenable to the kind of decisive and unflinching response evoked by blatant social injustice. Especially in interpretation over theoretical issues, one never fully escapes the desire for mastery. But a non-invidious sense of irony, i.e., one that is self- and not simply other-directed, may help to moderate if not to displace a dogmatic "discourse of power" (in the phrase Collins uses) that might otherwise run rampant in a blind or somnambulistic way.

With these considerations in mind, I would like to mention a number of points that Collins makes as if they were self-evident truths and indicate how they are doubtful or even wrong. 1) Collins asserts: "[LaCapra] takes inadequate notice...of the fact that the resort to the imaginary is not necessarily escapist for Sartre. The negation of the real is, to be sure, the unconditional principle of all imagining, but the real can be negated in order to intensify our experience of it and heighten our ability concretely to confront abuses we find in the world. Because LaCapra does not fully realize this, he incorrectly tells us that Sartre is obliged to allow prose fiction as described in *What Is Literature?* to escape from the early theory of the imagination. In reality the two works are effortlessly complementary." What Collins fails to notice is that I argue, on the basis of substantial discussion and quotation of the text, that Sartre in *L'Imaginaire* does not allow for a non-escapist use of the imagination. Two texts are "effortlessly complementary" only in the realm of wish-fulfillment. In any case, Collins provides no textual support for what he categorically asserts about *L'Imaginaire*. For some rather interesting reasons, Sartre in that text "does not fully realize" what Collins ascribes to my lack of imagination.

2) Collins asserts that I take "only slight notice" of the fact that Sartre "softens the lines" between prose and poetry after *What Is Literature?*. I am not sure that "softens the lines" is the appropriate expression, but I discuss the difficulties faced by the prose-poetry dichotomy not only in texts written after *What Is Literature?* but both in a text close to it in time ("L'Orphée noir") and in two very important footnotes to Part I of *What Is Literature?* itself. In addition, I discuss the crucial modificaiton introduced in a text Collins does not even mention: "A Plea for Intellectuals."

3) Collins asserts that in defense of my "crudely dismissive" discussion of the *Critique*, I support my argument by "erroneously call[ing] the practico-inert a simple substitution for the in-itself." My argument is that the view of the *Critique* as a dialectical overcoming of *Being and Nothingness* conceals the extent to which the later work is a displacement (or repetition with variation) of the earlier one in terms of its basic problematic. The idea of *simple* substitution is out of place here. If anything, my book might be criticized for being overly sensitive to the ways in which nothing is a *simple* substitution for anything else. The relation between praxis and the practico-inert is, I think, similar to that between the for-itself and the in-itself, and the continuities between the two forms of relationship are probably more important than the discontinuities. In both, something is taken as the transcendental source of meaning and value in the world and an understanding of basic interaction between seeming opposites is subordinated to an initial dichotomy. The notion of the

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in-itself as an objectification of freedom (and not simply as unconscious matter as Collins asserts) existed in *Being and Nothingness* in terms of the concept of facticity. Here is precisely what I write about the relation between the practico-inert and the in-itself: "The confrontation of the individual with matter produces worked-over matter as the result of praxis. This worked-over matter is a primary form of the practico-inert. The practico-inert might be seen as a 'baptized,' or named, in-itself of the second-order. In *Being and Nothingness*, this derivative in-itself was at least implicitly present but not given a distinctive name, or discussed to the same extent or granted the same importance. (In the earlier work, it referred, for example, to one's past as the facticity of the for-itself which the for-itself had to be in the mode of not being is — an essence or dead possibility that one had to face up to in an ongoing totalization or temporalization.)" (Pp. 162-63) One may disagree with this interpretation but I do not see how one can say that I present the practico-inert as a *simple* substitution for the in-itself.

4) Collins asserts: "Perhaps LaCapra's most serious error is his assertion that for Sartre scarcity has an ontological status. Although scarcity is the motor of history in the *Critique*, being the origin of class conflict, it is most definitely a historically contingent phenomenon, however stubborn it may be." It may be nit-picking to observe that in Sartre the ontological is not opposed to the contingent and that his early work is devoted to portraying the ontological in terms of radical contingency. The point I was trying to make is that in the *Critique* scarcity is initially understood in abstraction from the problem of institutions. The idea that scarcity in the *Critique* is "stubborn" is at best euphemistic, for it is coterminous with history as we have known or can imagine it, and it can be overcome only in the apocalyptic "reign of freedom." If "ontological" is inadequate to designate this status, Collins is free to substitute another word.

5) "Sartre's biographies draw the author's most unrelieved displeasure." Displeasure is not the point, nor is simple rejection. Collins fails to discuss my extensive treatment of *The Words* which I present as "decentering" my own analysis, and he also fails to note the conclusion to my discussion of *L'Idiot*.

6) Collins asserts: "Gustave [Flaubert] is forced into passivity; he is *constitutionally* unable to rise above the imposed role of family idiot. He has only one choice: to become the prince of the imaginary. There is no question of responsibility. Flaubert is not condemned for his inability to act to overcome his imposed destiny. I do not understand how an honest reading of *L'Idiot de la famille* could result in the opposite impression." If Collins is right in seeing the only "honest reading" as one that sees Sartre in *L'Idiot* as a complete determinist, he suggests a re-reading of the philosopher of freedom that is both more drastic than anything I attempted and more problematic in relation to any form of liberation. (It is puzzling, to say the least, that right after these astounding assertions, Collins launches into a defense of Sartre's condemnation of Flaubert for dehumanizing man as a mere puppet and martyr of Capital — a move that presumably presented man just as the bourgeoisie wanted to see him! By the way, I never accuse Sartre of falsifying known facts about Flaubert — or of being "truly false to facts" in Collins' uncanny formulation — but of engaging, in his quest for the "true novel," in a type of discourse in which it is difficult to distinguish between fact and fiction. More specifically, I note that his elaborate speculation concerning Flaubert's infancy is based on no known facts. And I attempt to raise doubts about his reading of Flaubert and his assertions about the expectations of Flaubert's reading public that Collins does not even mention.) Here I would oppose to Collins' "honest reading" Sartre's self-interpretation in an interview

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of 1970 — a self-interpretation that, I think, continues to apply to *L'Idiot*: "The idea that I have never stopped developing is that, in the last analysis, a person is always responsible for what one has made of him" (Quoted in *A Preface to Sartre*, p. 147).

I could go on in a way that might be seen as a further tribute to Sartre. But I shall conclude this response by returning briefly to the question of transparency, alienation, and utopia. The simple opposition between two types of transparency is, I think, deceptive, for the two meet and may even reinforce one another in certain frames of reference. In Bentham, one may recall, there was both the "artificial" identity of interests in a bureaucratic institution such as the panopticon and the "natural" identity of interests in the "free" marketplace. The over-riding goal was the identity of interests, and Bentham was willing to turn to either means if it proved to be efficient or available. In Rousseau, there was both the desire for heart-to-heart community and the problem of forcing men to be free. I think one has to take seriously the argument that the belief in, and the attempt to realize, the utopia of "reciprocity" (actually of *identity* in the general will, for there is no reciprocity without the interplay of similarity and difference) must fail and, in failing, foster the turn to the transparency of total power. In Sartre, there is certainly the Rousseauistic dream of the group-in-fusion in however transient a form, but there is along with it an extreme lability between the transparency of a community without secrets and the all-seeing gaze of power.

But there is also in Sartre (as there is in Rousseau) an active awareness that contests the dream of total transparency in any form — an awareness of an interplay between self and other that involves both disclosure and opaqueness. This awareness relates to a primary interaction between "opposites" that cannot be decided in terms of pure identities and differences. And it is most prominently in evidence, I think, in works such as *Nausea* and *The Words*. One may also find it in the brief discussions of transphenomenality and the viscous in *Being and Nothingness*. Here Sartre "begins" with the threshold or in-between phenomenon or process and not with the binary opposition (in-itself—for-itself or praxis—practico-inert) that "decides" it. And the larger problem becomes that of the relationship between structure and play. One might argue that, in these respects, alienation is not identified with the externalization of a full freedom or a fully transparent praxis that is to be reappropriated when counterfinality is undone in a utopian "realm of freedom." Indeed a different perspective on alienation becomes possible, and it situates the very understanding of alienation in terms of the externalization or reification of a full freedom or transparency as itself an aspect of alienation. Alienation can no longer be seen as alienation from a utopia wherein total freedom or pure transparency takes the place of the more traditional notion of "essence." For what is alienated on this view is precisely thought or life dominated by fictive pure identities or total splits that deny nonderivative interaction between "opposites" and seem open to transcendence only in some totalizing movement of synthesis. In this second view, the overcoming of alienation is not to be found in a utopian realm of reappropriated transparency but in a lived and conceived, tense and recurrent interplay between the "self" (or the "same") and the "other."

Toward the end of the last paragraph, I have of course moved from what I think can be plausibly inferred from certain works of Sartre to what Derrida more explicitly articulates or "thematizes" as a problem. And I have supplemented Derrida's own explicit formulations in certain ways. I have done so not simply to compare Sartre and Derrida but to open an interpretive perspective on Sartre that is not

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restricted to the understanding of his thought alone. In the light of the considerations I have tried to introduce, it may be partially accurate to say the Derrida's thought "brings to an end" the possibility (or actively notes the impossibility) of utopia, for utopia is a no-place that cannot be realized. But it also enables a rethinking of the status or function of utopia (which is not to be realized but to test and contest the actual). Utopian hope need not be dissolved in this process, but it is no longer identified with mythical belief, and it faces the problem of how to be reinvigorated rather than debilitated by critical forms such as irony. Derrida's approach, I think, also opens the possibility of raising again the question of what is meant by overcoming alienation once alienation is no longer conflated with alterity or "otherness." (I think this question is also raised at times in the works of Marx.) And it may be extended to broach the problem of social contexts and institutions that are themselves open to the interplay between self and other in terms that cannot be equated either with structures of domination or with total transparency. This is not to say that one can find an answer to all problems in Derrida or that his approach may not be abused or subjected to dubious extrapolations. Certain of my own initiatives may be open to question in this respect. But what I tried to indicate in my book was how a selective use of Derrida's strategies, which was neither a description nor a mechanical mimicry of them, might help to rethink certain problems relating to the interpretation of Sartre but having broader implications. A crucial way in which the book does, I think, invite argument is in its attempt to work out a "dialogical" notion of historical understanding having both political implications and a problematic relation to the more traditional goal of documentary reconstruction of the past. Collins did not engage this problem because he mistakenly saw the book as documentary reconstruction in the mode of comparison of Sartre with avatars, epigones, and critics.

REPLY TO LA CAPRA

by Douglas Collins

In one not unsubstantial sense, LaCapra is correct to insist that I have misrepresented his book. I was too exclusively focused on the accuracy of the representation (not a Derridean word, I know), and insufficiently attentive to the tools of representation, and their implications for politics and the historiography of ideas. The author suggests his method as a possible alternative model for doing intellectual history. I am pleased that readers of my review are now offered the author's own explanation of this fascinating ambition. On the issue of the vocabulary of confrontation and choice, however, I have no such regret. I fully realize that the book is intended to be a playful, ironic juxtaposition, but such is not the effect. Sartre is read with the aid of Derridean categories. Derrida comes in for a touch of criticism, while Sartre, to say the least, comes in for something more than that. The book does not officially offer itself as a clash with a winner-loser outcome, for this would not be consistent with its operative epistemology that is founded upon a metaphysics of flux. By using this kind of a static model LaCapra would be falling into an either-or power game from which he finds that Sartre does not escape, and from which he hopes to escape himself. A spirit of untendentious play, however, does

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not set the tone. Philosophy, here, does not mimic the purposeless play of the world. What we have in this book is a traversal of Sartre's work that has much Dionysian élan, but little system. The approach is too scattered.

On the issue of transparency our differences were less great than they seemed, and now they exist not at all. By objecting to his affiliation of Sartre's ideal of transparency with that of Bentham, I was unhappy about a misrepresentation of Sartre's *intention*. I agree entirely that the two traditions of transparency in all probability collapse into one another. In general, I am most sympathetic to LaCapra's point that Sartre often falls into the positions from which he seeks to flee. With different evidence I use the same argument on a variety of occasions in my own book on Sartre.

LaCapra is quite correct to notice that our differences over the issues of alienation and personal responsibility are decisive, and so they remain. His relaxed use of the term "ontological" surprises me, for it results in an unjustified blurring of the line between the two basic and very distinct varieties of alienation described in the *Critique*. Sartre here returns to the Hegelian notion that any objectification of the self in the world returns as Other. This alienation has an ontological status. Although it is the primary alienation that structurally makes possible all other forms of alienation, it is itself not socially problematic. Although it founds alienation based on scarcity and exploitation, it is not a cause of tension between men, for it involves an encounter with the object that is not colored by the revelation of lack. Strictly speaking, therefore, it is an ahistorical experience. Only historically contingent varieties of alienation, that is to say those that exist because of the fact of material scarcity, are socially problematic. If these alienations were to be assigned an ontological status, Sartre would have been a strange Marxist indeed.

I am astonished at LaCapra's amazement over my remarks on Sartre's refusal to blame Flaubert. Once, of course, Sartre did hold the novelist personally responsible for the repression that followed the Commune, but in *L'Idiot de la famille* this has changed. By saying that Flaubert is blamed, LaCapra illegitimately conflates the early with the late Sartre. Sartre has never changed his view that the substance of consciousness is itself freedom. But what has altered in his thinking, and altered drastically, is his view of what conditions make it possible or impossible for a man to sense himself free to change the forces that insult his autonomy and that of others. Freedom is ontologically given, but whether this fact is revealed or hidden from an individual depends upon the affective environment he experiences in the decisive early years, an environment that is not entirely plugged into historical categories properly speaking. In *Saint Genet*, Sartre said that there are those, who because of their early conditioning, think of themselves as object men. Even for these unfortunates there is always a margin of freedom, but this margin has been very much reduced, and has bearing only upon relatively superficial matters. A certain degree of spontaneity is always available to such men, but they are not at liberty to change their essence in any substantial sense. Genet has become free and responsible because he was given the tools to do so by his environment: he was conditioned to believe that he was the subject, as well as the object of history.

Underlying economic forces determine general social conditions. But our various individual reactions to these conditions are only incompletely determined by economic forces. Other, more local, idiosyncratic determinisms also enter into the mix of character. Men are more or less free because of emotional as well as material deprivation. It is the family situation that is crucial. In the film by Contat and Astruc, Sartre says: "I think...that one feels oneself free when one has experienced

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no family conflict during childhood — I had none myself — and that one has been loved by one's mother, and, in sum, that one has created for oneself a certain world in which one becomes indispensable; that is to say that the family treats you in such a way that you believe yourself to be indispensable to it, so that you sense yourself to be someone who is generous, and who fulfills it." Obviously, most child rearing practices are inspired by social needs. But there are others that fall through the broadly sewn net of historical categories.

For one of the mentioned causes of a sense of freedom, and another as well, Flaubert is a man who cannot be blamed. In his early years his mother treated him frostily. Thus he did not experience what Sartre calls the original "valorization," or "the happy alienation" that brings a man to think of himself as a subject of history, as someone who is able to change his circumstances irregardless of how adverse they may seem. Also, because he was over-protected, Flaubert was conditioned to be passive. Thus his sense of himself as unfree was overdetermined. By no means is the Sartre of *L'Idiot* a total determinist. Flaubert can act spontaneously, but he is not free to change himself in any way that might be termed decisive. Flaubert was free to fall in different ways in order to avoid a fatal encounter with his law exams, but fall he must. It is possible to speak of individual responsibility in Sartre, but not in the case of Flaubert. In *L'Idiot*, if Sartre may be said to point a finger through the social fabric towards a specific individual, it is not at the novelist, but rather at "the Stalinist wife" of Achille-Cléophas Flaubert.

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JEAN-PAUL SARTRE 1905-1980

INTRODUCTION

by Michel Rybalka*

Jean-Paul Sartre's health had been deteriorating steadily during the last few years, mainly because of arthritis and a poor circulatory system. Since 1974, he was half blind: he could not write and had to curtail his activities. When I saw him for the last time in early July 1979 with Geneviève Idt to give him an informal report on the just completed Sartre colloquium at Cerisy-la-Salle, he was mentally and intellectually alert, with that mixture of passion and wisdom which characterized our last encounters. It was obvious, however, that, physically, age and sickness had taken their toll. I left him with the dismal impression that, given his poor overall physical condition, the next crisis would indeed be very serious.

On March 20, 1980, Sartre was taken to the hospital Broussais in Paris for a pulmonary oedema. His condition was not then considered as critical and he was tended

*The present section has been prepared with the collaboration of Douglas Collins (author of the just published *Sartre as Biographer,* Harvard University Press) and David J. Fisher.

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for by Simone de Beauvoir and his adopted daughter Arlette Elkaïm. On April 13, he went into a semi-coma and died, unconscious, on April 15 at 9 p.m. Among his latest concerns was the reception given to the long interview he had earlier with Benny Lévy (his constant companion in his last years, who on this occasion abandoned his pseudonym of Pierre Victor). This interview, which was published in three installments in *Le Nouvel Observateur* and is translated here, ended on the theme of hope, which may well become a dominant topic of the early eighties. Before his death, he gave two other interviews, one on Flaubert (published in *L'Arc*), the other on homosexuality (not otherwise significant, published in the interestingly named paper, *Le Gai-Pied*).

There was no official burial. President Giscard (who characterized him as "one of the great lights (*lueurs*) of intelligence of our time") went to the hospital Broussais to pay him a last homage, but refrained from ordering any public commemoration. On April 19, an unusual event took place: a crowd of about 50,000 people, unorganized, without any pomp or police intervention, comprised of intellectuals, young people, actors, political figures and simple folks, accompanied Sartre's body to the Montparnasse cemetery. A few years earlier, Sartre had expressed the wish to be cremated after his death. This was done, and his ashes were placed during a private ceremony in a tomb at the Montparnasse cemetery, not very far from the apartment at 31, Boulevard Edgar-Quinet (facing the Montparnasse tower), where he had spent the last years of his life. The tomb bears the simple inscription: "Jean-Paul Sartre 1905-1980."

Coverage of Sartre's death in the French press was unusually extensive and even surpassed the coverage given to De Gaulle. *Le Monde*, in its April 17 issue, had more than seven pages, and papers such as *Libération* and *Le Matin* brought out substantial special editions. Although commentaries were almost unanimously eulogious and favorable, opinions once again followed the usual political gamut and considerable emphasis was given to Sartre's "errors." A few unfavorable articles appeared in the right-wing press, with one commentator comparing Sartre to the singer Tino Rossi. The most despicable piece, however, was Jean-Edern Hallier's article in *Paris-Match*.

It is too early to evaluate Sartre's place in history and culture. The Sartrians themselves have so far remained silent. That his place is considerable is beyond doubt: Sartre's written work and his political actions are inseparable from what has happened in the last fifty years. As Audiberti termed it, Sartre was present in "all the battlefronts of intelligence," and as François Mauriac recognized it thirty years ago, he is certainly "le contemporain capital." It is for us to see how much Sartre's work and example constitute a hope for the future. As Roland Barthes, who met his untimely death in March, put it: "Sartre est un auteur d'avenir." For the time being, Sartre's death leaves us with a great void.

We present here a choice of the most original articles which appeared in the French press. In subsequent issues we will publish several longer pieces on Sartre's thought, in addition to those already published.[1]

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1. The following articles, on or by Sartre, have appeared in *Telos:* "The Risk of Spontaneity and the Logic of the Institution: An Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre," in *Telos*, no. 4 (Fall, 1969), pp. 191-205; Jean-Paul Sartre "Reply to Structuralism: An Interview," in *Telos*, no. 9 (Fall, 1971), pp. 110-116; Ronald Aronson, "The Root of Sartre's Thought," in *Telos*, no. 13 (Fall, 1972), pp. 47-67; Ronald Aronson, "Sartre's Individualistic Social Theory," in *Telos*, no. 16 (Summer, 1973), pp. 68-91; "On Maoism: An Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre," in *Telos*, no. 16 (Fall, 1973), pp. 92-101; Douglas Kellner, "Review of Jean-Paul Sartre, P. Gavi, P. Victor, *On a Raison de se Revolter*," in *Telos*, no. 22 (Winter, 1974-75), pp. 188-201; Istvan Maszaros, "Phases of Sartre's Development," in *Telos*, no. 25 (Fall, 1975), pp. 112-132; "The Kosik-Sartre Exchange," in *Telos*, no. 25 (Fall, 1975), pp. 193-195.

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TODAY'S HOPE: CONVERSATIONS WITH SARTRE*

by Benny Lévy

I

Lévy: "For some time you have been asking yourself about hope and despair. These are themes that you did not treat very much in your writings."

Sartre: "At least, not in the same way. Because I always thought that everyone loves with hope, I mean that everyone thinks that whatever he has undertaken, or whatever concerns him, or the social group to which he belongs, is in the process of being fulfilled, and will be favorable to him as well as to the people who constitute his community. I believe that hope is part of man; human action is transcendent, that is to say, that it always aims at a future object from the present in which it is conceived and in which we seek to fulfill it; human action finds its end, its fulfillment in the future; and, in the way of acting, there is always hope, I mean, the fact of setting a goal as something to be achieved."

Lévy: "You have said that human action aims at a future goal, but you immediately added that this action was fruitless. Hope is necessarily disappointed. Among the waiter of a café, a leader of the people — Hitler or Stalin — a Parisian drunkard, the militant revolutionary Marxist and Jean-Paul Sartre, among all these people there seemed to be something in common: if all set a number of goals for themselves, all, as they were, failed."

Sartre: "I did not say that exactly, you exaggerate. I said that they never really attained what they had searched for, that there was always a failure...."

Lévy: "You have claimed that human action projects an end into the future, but you have also said that this movement of transcendence led to failure. You described an existence in *Being and Nothingness* which projected goals as absolute loss even though with a perfect spirit of seriousness. Man posed goals for himself but, deep inside, the only one he wished to achieve was to be God, what you called to be self-caused. Whence, naturally, the failure."

Sartre: "Well, I have not completely lost this idea of failure, even if it contradicts the idea of hope. One must not forget that I wasn't talking of hope at the time of *Being and Nothingness.* And it was later that the idea of the value of hope came to me slowly. I never conceived of hope as a lyrical illusion. I always considered, even when I didn't talk about it, that it was a way of conceiving the end I had set as something that could be attained."

Lévy: "Perhaps you were not speaking of hope but of despair."

Sartre: "Yes, I was speaking of despair but, as I often said, it was not the opposite of hope. Despair was the belief that my basic ends could not be attained and that consequently there was in human reality an essential failure. And, finally, at the time of *Being and Nothingness,* only in despair could I find a lucid view of what the human condition was."

Lévy: "You told me once: 'I've spoken of despair, but it is a joke. I spoke about it because other people spoke about it, because it was fashionable: people were reading Kierkegaard.'"

Sartre: "Exactly, I've never despaired; I have never seriously considered despair as a quality that could be mine. Therefore it was Kierkegaard who influenced me on that point."

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Lévy: "It is funny since you don't really like Kierkegaard."
Sartre: "Yes, but in any case, I was influenced by him. His words seemed to have a reality for others. So, I wanted to take them into account in my philosophy. It was a fashion: the idea that something was missing in my self-knowledge, from which I could not draw despair. But it was necessary to consider that if other people talked about it, it was because it must exist for them. But notice that one no longer finds this despair in my work. That was just a phase. I see that in the work of many philosophers, with respect to despair and with respect to any philosophical idea, they speak from hearsay in the early period of their philosophy; they assign it a very important value and then slowly they no longer talk about it because they become aware that the content does not exist for them and that they derive it from others."
Lévy: "Is that also true of anguish?"
Sartre: "I've never experienced anguish. It was a key philosophical notion from 1930 to 1940. It also came from Heidegger; these were notions one used all the time but which, to me, did not correspond to anything. Surely I knew desolation, boredom, misery, but...."
Lévy: "Misery...."
Sartre: "In short, I knew it for others, I could see it, if you will. But anguish and despair, no. In short, let us not go back to that point because it does not concern our research."
Lévy: "Yes, it is important to know, however, that you have not spoken of hope and that when you spoke of despair, it was not mainly your thought."
Sartre: "My thought was my thought, but the rubric under which I organized it, despair, was foreign to me. To me the most important thing was the idea of failure, the idea of failure concerning what may be called an absolute end. In a few words, what was not said in *Being and Nothingness* is that each man, beyond the theoretical or practical ends that he has at every moment and which concern, for instance, political or educational questions, etc., beyond all that, each man has an end — an end that I would call transcendent or absolute, and that all these practical ends only have meaning in connection with that end. The meaning of a man's action is therefore this end which varies from individual to individual, but which has this peculiarity: it is absolute. And hope, as well as failure, is bound to this absolute goal in this sense: that real failure concerns this end."
Lévy: "And is this failure inevitable?"
Sartre: "We arrive here at a contradiction which I haven't resolved but which I think I can resolve as a result of these conversations. On one hand, I retain the idea that the life of a man manifests itself as a failure; what he intended to achieve, he does not accomplish. He does not even manage to think what he wants to think or to feel what he wants to feel. This leads as a rule to an absolute pessimism. I did not intend this in *Being and Nothingness* but I am forced to say it today. And then, on the other hand, since 1945, I have been thinking more and more that one essential characteristic of the action undertaken, as I was telling you a moment ago, is hope. And hope means that I cannot undertake an action without assuming that I am going to realize it. And I do not think, as I said, that this hope is a lyrical illusion; it is in the nature of action itself. That is to say that action, being at the same time hope, cannot in principle be devoted to a certain and absolute failure. This does not mean that it must necessarily fulfill its goal, but that it appears in the fulfillment of an end conceived as future. And there is in hope itself a sort of necessity. To me, the idea of failure has, at this moment, no solid basis: on the contrary, hope as far as it is the relation of man to his goal, a relation which exists even if the goal is not attained, is what remains the most present in

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my thoughts."

Lévy: "Let's take an example: that of Sartre. As a child he decides to write and this decision consecrates him to immortality. What does Sartre say at the end of his work? What does he say about this decision? This choice of choices, your choice, is it a failure?"

Sartre: "I have often said that it was a failure on a metaphysical level. By that I meant that I have not written a sensational work, as Shakespeare's or as Hegel's, and therefore, in relation to what I would have wanted, it is a failure. But my answer seems too false. Surely, I am not Shakespeare and I am not Hegel, but I have written works that I polished as much as I could; some of them have been failures, for sure, others less, and others have been successes. And that is enough."

Lévy: "But the whole in relation to your decision?"

Sartre: "The whole is successful. I know that I have not always said the same thing, and, on that point, we are in conflict, because I think that my contradictions mattered little, that in spite of everything I have always moved in the same direction."

Lévy: "You have indeed aimed straight! There, you do not think that failure is ineluctably bound to the position of the end in the element of the absolute."

Sartre: "I do not think so. Besides, if one wants to go so far as ignobility, one can think that I never thought about me, even though thinking it for others. I could see how they made mistakes, how even when they thought they had succeeded, it was a total failure. And as for me, I said to myself that to think about it and to write was to make it successful, and I succeeded in my work in a more general way. Surely, I did not think about it clearly; otherwise I would have become aware of the enormous contradiction, but I did think about it."

Lévy: "What then distinguishes the desire for being of a waiter — a waiter full of that spirit of seriousness about which we spoke at the beginning — from Sartre's desire for immortality leaving aside everything ignoble. Or is there nothing except ignobility in this difference?"

Sartre: "I think, in spite of everything, that the idea of immortality to which I yielded when I wrote and until I stopped writing was a daydream. I think that immortality exists but not as such. I will try to explain myself later. I think that the manner in which I wanted immortality, as I conceived it, was not very much different from that of the waiter or from Hitler, but that it was the way in which I fashioned my work that was different. My work was correct, moral; we'll see what this means. Therefore, I believe that a certain number of ideas which necessarily accompany actions, for instance, the idea of immortality, are suspicious and confusing. My work has not been governed by the will to be immortal."

Lévy: "But can't we start with this difference? You talk to us about your work as a generous past, a pact of confidence between the reader and the author. You have always done the essential part of the writer's task."

Sartre: "The social task."

Lévy: "Is there not in that social task the expression of a desire which is, at least, as basic as the desire to be of which you speak in *Being and Nothingness*?"

Sartre: "Yes, but I think that it needs to be defined. I think that there is another modality other than the first modality of the spirit of seriousness. It is the moral modality. And the moral modality implies that we cease, at least at that level, to place being as our goal; we no longer want to be God; we no longer want to be *causa sui*; we seek something else."

Lévy: "After all, this idea of *causa sui* only manifests a well-defined theological tradition."

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Sartre: "Yes, if you wish."
Lévy: "From Christianity to Hegel."
Sartre: "Yes, I agree, I suppose. It is my tradition; I have no other: neither the oriental tradition, nor the Jewish tradition. They are absent because of my historicity."
Lévy: "You have just separated yourself from this tradition by freeing yourself from this tradition, to be a God-man, by freeing yourself from this definition of being one's cause."
Sartre: "Yes, I think that the morality we are considering is not bound to Christian tradition; what we ought to consider, and the ends that we ought to seek in morality, are not those that Christianity offers us."
Lévy: "The pact of generosity would propel us, to a certain extent, into wanting a society that is at least as basic as what 'the spirit of seriousness' calls the desire to be?"
Sartre: "I believe so. Would it be necessary to define clearly what is meant here by society? It is not the democracy or the pseudo-democracy of the Fifth Republic. It is a question of a different kind of relations among men. It is not the socio-economic relation that Marx considered, either."
Lévy: "In your exhausting debate with Marxism, didn't you seek what we would today call the social desire in order to abandon the dialectics of bad faith expressed in *Being and Nothingness?*"
Sartre: "Without a doubt."
Lévy: "You thought you were opening a moral perspective at the end of *Being and Nothingness* and then you did not write a book offering a solution, but you engaged in a debate with Marxism. One must believe that both things are closely related."
Sartre: "Intimately."
Lévy: "You believed that by the meaning of history as defined by Hegel and Marxism one could go beyond the dead end to which *Being and Nothingless* led."
Sartre: "Yes, only roughly. And then, I thought that it was necessary to seek an answer somewhere else, and that is what I'm doing now. I tell you that this search for real socially moral goals goes hand in hand with the idea of finding a principle for the Left as it exists today, a Left that has abandoned everything, which is now defeated, which allows the miserable parties of the Right to win."
Levy: "And bitchy."
Sartre: "When I say the Right, I mean the bastards. This Left, either it dies, and at the present moment, it is man who is dying, or it finds some new principles. I would like our discussion to be the sketch of a morality and the discovery of the guiding principle of the Left."
Lévy: The closest approximation to which we can arrive is that the basis of the Left is somehow related to a societal desire."
Sartre: "Absolutely, and to hope. You see, my works are a failure. I haven't said everything I wanted to say or in the manner in which I wanted to say it. This was, sometimes in my life, quite painful; other times, I misconstrued my errors and I thought that I had done what I wanted to do. But right now, I don't believe either. I believe I did more or less what I could, that it was worth what it was worth. Posterity will refute many of my assertions; I hope that some will remain. However, at any rate, one of the movements of history leads slowly to man's awareness of himself. Then, everything that will have been accomplished in the past will take its place, will have a sense. For instance, what I have written. That is what will give a sort of immortality to everything we have done. In other words, one must believe in progress. And that is perhaps one of my last naivetés."

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Lévy: "Let's come back to your debate with the revolutionaries. You said that you shared their goals. But deep inside, you remained distrustful. You stated it in those terms more or less. You were nothing but a fellow traveler. Didn't that favor a double system of thought?"

Sartre: "That's not exactly true. It is not a double system of thought, it is that I find every party to be stupid, because ideas come from the higher ranks and affect what the lower ranks think. It is the best way to come up with a stupid idea. Because it is in the lower ranks that ideas have to be conceived. They cannot be estimated from above. That is why the idea of a party has repelled me since I was twenty. One must recognize that a party has no truth and that it doesn't expect to have one; the party has intentions and it goes in a certain direction: a fellow traveler means exactly 'the guy who tries to think outside of the party and who hopes that the party will use the truths he has found.' "

Lévy: "A possible result of this practice of the fellow traveler: Romain Rolland arrives in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, at the time of compulsory collectivism, of the elimination of thousands of peasants, of the twilight of the spirit and declares: 'I've seen in the Soviet Union a remarkable expansion of the rights of the human spirit.' "

Sartre: "Romain Rolland is not an outstanding thinker."

Lévy: "Sartre arrives in the Soviet Union in 1954, takes an official tour, and, upon his return, declares in an evening paper that the USSR is the country that has the most freedom."

Sartre: "It is true that I thought very good things about it, less than what you think, but that is how I protected myself from thinking negatively about it."

Lévy: "The fellow traveler has some curious intellectual habits."

Sartre: "I don't mean that a fellow traveler is perfect; it isn't simple. As a matter of fact, I do not now seek to defend the fellow traveler because unfortunately his ideas are meant for the party but are not accepted by it."

Lévy: "A party — stupid in the way in which you defined it — and a fellow traveler, that is to say, an intellectual who, as an intellectual, would have a notion of truth. One plus the other gives something that failed miserably, that you know well."

Sartre: "I know, I know."

Lévy: "So, then, you seem to be giving a sort of posthumous praise of the fellow traveler?"

Sartre: "I only say that at the present, the parties are screwed up. It is evident that in twenty or thirty years the important parties of the Left will no longer be what they are. Maybe one or two will have died. Something else will happen and there will be no fellow travelers. That will be, I've explained, a series of mass movements with definite and particular goals. In these mass movements, the notion of the fellow traveler will no longer have any meaning."

Lévy: "Your fellow traveler will yield its soul. I would like to have a death certificate drawn up. Who will be dead? A sinister scoundrel, a hustler, or basically a sound being?"

Sartre: "I'd rather say someone who isn't bad. Not necessarily a hustler: he could be that in certain circumstances. When he yielded to the demands of the party, he would have become a scoundrel or a hustler. But he could also resist giving in, and then he would not have been too bad. To put it simply, it was the party who made things unbearable. If he was a fellow traveler, it was because there was a party."

Lévy: "Let's speak clearly. This figure of the fellow traveler, is it a failure among other failures that have undermined the ideology of the Left for the last forty years?"

Sartre: "In my opinion, yes."

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Lévy: "What do you think today of this aspect of your activity?"
Sartre: "I wasn't very much of a fellow traveler. I was one in 1951-52; in '54 I went to the USSR and almost immediately after, with the events in Hungary, I broke with the party. That is my experience as a fellow traveler. Four years. And, moreover, it was of secondary importance to me, since I was doing something else at that time."
Lévy: "Don't we find the suspicion of the double system of thought?"
Sartre: "I always said that I thought differently from the party. It is not a double play. I would persuade myself that the pseudo-ideas of the party had to contain certain truths, that they had to have a solid *base* and that their stupid aspect was only superficial. As a matter of fact, I was impressed because the Communist Party called itself the party of the workers. I believe it is a mistake. An intellectual needs something to hold on to, and I had found that, as had many others."
Lévy: "Let's talk about this need of the intellectual to hold on to something. How can you explain that this need finally led, finally led you and so many others, to hold on to the Stalinist rock?"
Sartre: "It was not Stalinism. Stalinism had died with Stalin. Today, Stalinism is used to denigrate anything."
Lévy: "How can it be explained that intellectuals had needed to hold on to, I mean, find a support and a basis in that junk?"
Sartre: "Because it was a question of finding a future for society. It was necessary for society to stop being the shit it is today, everywhere. I did not think I could change the world by myself, by my own thought, but I distinguished those social forces that were trying to move forward and I found that my place was among them."
Lévy: "Don't we see one point more clearly? At the beginning, the completely independent intellectual, unconcerned about the Communist Party, wrote *Being and Nothingness* and did not manage to anchor hope, to give a positive content to this transcendence projecting itself toward future ends...."
Sartre: " — does not manage to, but does not seek it, either..."
Lévy: "The independent intellectual does not go out of his way to find a truth in the heart of the junk of the Communist Party; no, he elaborates a thought without giving an account to anyone. But you arrive at a dead end and, by means of the opposition, you can catch a glimpse of content; you assume that your previous conclusion was not accurate and that in order to give content to the future you need to resort to a delegation."
Sartre: "Yes, I need united men because it will be impossible for one or two separate entities to shake up the social body and to make it collapse. It is necessary to imagine a body made up of fighting people."
Lévy: "Fine. You manage quickly to lay down the question of the group, of the union of a plurality of men acting together, as the key issue of revolutionary thought. You will write a book almost eight hundred pages long in order to set up a theory of practical ensembles."
Sartre: "A book that is not finished!"
Lévy: "And which was expected to have eight hundred more pages. However, in order to set up this theory of practical ensembles, you are forced to resort to a representation of the final end of history. You borrow it from Marxism: the working class is responsible for completing human prehistory. Let's add everything up. One can see that you have drifted from your initial definition of the ultimate goal as failure to a second definition of the ultimate goal as the completion of history by the proletariat."
Sartre: "Without ever forgetting failure."
Lévy: "In the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, it is true that one sees failure because

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every time one expects to find fraternity, one trips over terror. But the fact is that the principle of the movement of thought in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* is that there is an ultimate end."

Sartre: "A second part dealing with this ultimate end was expected to be added and, as you know, I didn't write it."

Lévy: "Neither of the two definitions you proposed is satisfying. The first, since you abandoned it for the second one; and the second one, if I dare say so, because our period abandons it."

Sartre: "I believed that evolution through action would be a series of failures from which something positive, already contained in the failure and ignored by those who had wished to succeed, would result unexpectedly. This positive result would be these partial, local successes, difficult to recognize by those who had worked for them but, which, from failure to failure, would accomplish some progress. It is thus that I have understood history."

Lévy: "Confronted by the difficulty of thinking and living failure and meaning at the same time, confronted by the risks of error, one can preferably abandon the idea of an end..."

Sartre: "Then why live?"

Lévy: "I'm glad to hear you say so. How does this idea of an end appear today?"

Sartre: "Via man."

Lévy: "Explain."

Sartre: "I mean that it would be possible to demonstrate what a man is. First, you know that for me there is no *a priori* nature; therefore, what a man is is not yet established. We are not whole men. We are beings who struggle to arrive at human relations and to a definition of man. We are now in the midst of a struggle and that will undoubtedly last for several years. But this struggle needs to be defined: we seek to live together as men, and to be men. Therefore, it is by searching for this definition and this specifically human action, beyond humanism of course, that we can consider our effort and our end. In other words, our end is to arrive at a real constituted body where each person would be a man and in which all collectivities would be equally human."

Lévy: "Before 1939, you said that humanism was shit. Some years later, without accounting for your change, you gave a lecture where you asked: Is existentialism a humanism? You said yes. Then, a few years later, at the time of the colonial wars, you explained that humanism is a fig leaf for colonialism; today, you tell us: man has to be fashioned, but that has nothing to do with humanism."

Sartre: "I hated in humanism a certain way that man has of admiring himself. That is what the self-taught man in *Nausea* was expected to emphasize. I always refused this type of humanism and I still refuse it. I was perhaps too definitive. What I think is that, when man will exist really and completely, his relations with his fellow men and his way of being by himself might be the object of what may be labeled a humanism, that is, it will be simply man's way of being, his relation with his neighbor and his way of being in himself. But we are not at that point; we are pre-men, that is, beings who have not reached an end that they might not ever attain, but towards which they project themselves. At that moment what would be the meaning of humanism? If one views beings as finished and closed totalities, humanism is not possible in our time. On the contrary, if one considers that these pre-men have within them certain principles that are human, I mean, certain germs which lead to man and which anticipate the being that constitutes the pre-man, then to think the relations from individuals to individuals by the principles that are imperative today, we will be able to call that a

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humanism. There is essentially the morality of the relation with the other. That is a moral theme that will remain when man will be. A theme of that kind can give rise to a humanist affirmation."

Lévy: "Marx had also said that man will be really total at the end. With such reasoning, one has taken pre-men as primary matter in order to construct the new integral and total man."

Sartre: "Oh yes, but that is then absurd. It is precisely the human side that is found in the pre-man, and these are the principles that lead men to forbid themselves to use men as matter or as a means to an end. It is at that point that we are within a morality."

Lévy: "In another period, wouldn't you have denounced this appeal to morality as being formal or, worse, as bourgeois? We played that game. You talk to us about prohibitions, you talk to us about what is human. All that would have made you laugh before! What has changed then?"

Sartre: "As you know, very many things, which will be discussed here. In any case, I would have laughed, I would have talked of bourgeois morality; I would have been full of shit. To take things as they are and according to the facts and to the pre-men who surround us, to take ourselves directly without taking into account our bourgeois or proletariat essence, humanism can only be achieved, can only be lived by men. And we, who are in a former period, who push toward the men we ought to be and who our descendants will be, we only live humanism as the experience of what is best in us, as an effort to go beyond ourselves within the circle of men — men who can be prefigured from our better acts."

Lévy: "What do you understand today by morality?"

Sartre: "I mean whatever consciousness has a dimension, the dimension of obligation, which I haven't studied in my philosophical works and which few other people have studied as such. The term of obligation is not good but in order to find another one it would almost be necessary to invent it. I mean that any time that I am aware of anything, or that I do anything, there is a sort of request that goes beyond the real and which transforms the action I seek to accomplish into a sort of internal constraint that is a dimension of my consciousness. Every consciousness must do what it does, not because what it does is really valid, but because whatever objective it may have, it appears to have a character of request and that is to me the beginning of morality."

Lévy: "For a long time, you have been sensitive to the idea that the individual is mandated. You added, in the *Idiot of the Family,* by quoting Kafka, 'but one does not know by whom.' This idea of a mandated freedom without knowing by whom it is mandated — is that how you would sketch the idea of a necessary freedom?"

Sartre: "I believe it is the same thing. In every classical moral philosophy, whether Aristotle's or Kant's, one encounters the same difficulty: where is morality placed in the consciousness? Is it an appearance? Are we moral all the time? Are there instances in which one is not moral without being immoral? When one eats or when one drinks a glass of wine, does one feel moral or immoral or nothing at all? We also ignore the relationship between the morality that people teach to their children as being the everyday morality and the morality of exceptional circumstances. I believe that each consciousness has this moral dimension that is never analyzed and that I would like us to analyze."

Lévy: "But you defined consciousness as being moral in your early writings; freedom was the only source of its worth. You are bending your thought."

Sartre: "Because in my early research, as most moralists, I was seeking morality in a consciousness having no reciprocal or other (I prefer other to reciprocal), and today I

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think that everything that takes place in a consciousness at a certain moment is necessarily bound, even conceived, by the presence or even by the absence, at that moment, of the existence of the other. In other words, to me all consciousness seems to be constituting itself as consciousness, and at the same time, as consciousness of the other and as consciousness for the other. That reality is what I call moral consciousenss, that is, this itself considered as itself for the other, and having a relation with the other.

"Since we are constantly present to the other, even when we go to bed and when we sleep, since the other appears at the same time as a subtle constraint and as something that cannot be achieved. And when one acts one makes a choice, a free choice. This constraint is surreal as far as it does not determine. It appears as constraint and the choice is made freely."

Lévy: "Is old age what makes you change your mind?"

Sartre: "No, everyone treats me as an old man. I laugh about it. Why? Because an old man never feels like an old man. I understand, from the others, what old age implies to those who watch it from the outside, but I do not feel my old age. Therefore, my old age is not something that, in itself, teaches me something. What teaches me something is the attitude others have toward me. The fact that I am old for the other is to be old. Old age is one of my realities as experienced by others; they see me and say that old man, and they are nice because I am going to die soon, and they are respectful, etc. It is the others who are my old age. Pay attention to this: in spite of the way in which you participate in this dialogue by eclipsing your personality and talking about me, we are working together."

Lévy: "How has this 'we' modified your thinking and why have you accepted it?"

Sartre: "Originally, as you know, I needed someone with whom I could have a dialogue, someone I thought would be like a secretary — I was forced to talk since I couldn't write. And I suggested it to you, but I realized immediately that you couldn't be a secretary, that it was necessary for you to be part of the meditation. I mean that we had to meditate together. That has completed my way of researching because up to now, I had always worked alone, seated at a table with pen and paper in front of me, whereas now we shape thoughts together. Sometimes we do not agree. This constitutes an exchange that I could only have in my old age."

Lévy: "Is it the lesser of two evils?"

Sartre: "At the beginning, yes, and then this collaboration could not be the lesser of two evils. It was something terrible: my thought being diluted by someone else or by something new; it was a thought being fashioned by two people. I write, and the ideas I offer through my writings are universal, but they are not plural. They are universal, that is, that each one reading them will form his thoughts, right or wrong. But they are not plural insofar as they are not the result of a meeting of several minds and only bear my mark. A plural thought has no privileged entry; it is approached by each person in a different manner; it has only one meaning. But this meaning is produced by each person from different premises and preoccupations, and its structure is understood by each from different perspectives.

"When there is only one author, thought bears its mark: one enters his thought and one travels those roads that the author has traced, even if it is universal. This is what our collaboration brings me: plural thoughts that we have fashioned together and which constantly give me something new — even if I agreed with them from the beginning. I thought that whatever you could say to modify one of my ideas, your objections or a different way of looking at the idea, etc., was the essential, essential because it no longer placed me in front of a public imagined from behind a sheet of

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paper — what it had always before been to me — but in front of the real reaction that my ideas were supposed to elicit. At that moment you started to become extremely interesting to me. Likewise, there was something else that mattered very much: at fifteen, you started to think about philosophy from my writings and you remember very well. Much better than I. In our conversations, this matters because you take me back to what I said in 1945 or in 1950 in order to make me realize how my present ideas may contradict or reassert those ideas.

"Finally, you were extremely useful. One cannot really feel this in our conversation because, as always, when you are not alone with me, you hide in the background in order that the people may see, in spite of everything, an old man who has engaged a very intelligent guy to work with him, and who is the main character. But that is not what takes place between us, and that is not what I want. We are two men, regardless of our age difference, who know well the history of philosophy and the history of my ideas and who associate to work on morality, a morality that will often be in contradiction with certain ideas that I had. The problem does not lie there. But your real importance to what we are doing is not felt in our discussion."

Lévy: "It is the presence of the third reader that twists our discussion."

Sartre: "I know it well, but since it is the third reader for whom we write..."

II

Lévy: "Not long ago you stated that the political Left [in France] was dead. Clearly, you were expressing aloud what many people have doubtless been thinking to themselves; but it is not enough simply to say that the Left is dead. The issue needs to be examined a little more closely. There is still a Left electorate; there are still parties of the Left; so what does the statement that the Left is dead actually mean?"

Sartre: "First, it means that the Left electorate always votes Left, i.e., for the parties of the Left, but that it has lost hope. It no longer believes that voting gives expression to a higher purpose. Voting for the Communists used to be considered a revolutionary act. At the present, it is obviously considered to be no more than an act of traditional republicanism. There is a party called the Communist Party, and people vote for it normally as one would vote for any other party."

Lévy: "But weren't we already saying this during the time of Leftism? We used to criticize the electoral politics of the Left parties."

Sartre: "But Leftism also has disappeared. That is to say, on the one hand, that there is the electoral politics of the parties of the Left, which makes impossible the very idea of a strong and total change, the idea of a revolution — and, on the other hand, there is the insurrectional aspect of Leftism, and this too has disappeared. Thus, at the present it is no longer possible to take action as the people of '68 did with a strike, with a street demonstration, etc., such a thing would not have any meaning right now. True, it could be done, one can easily conceive of a demonstration that would go to the Bastille, in which people would be beaten by the cops, and which perhaps might lay a few of them out, too. But so what? The situation would remain exactly the same. Whereas those actions used to provide the Left with some satisfaction, perhaps it was an illusion, that is a subject we could discuss. And now, that's all over. Everyone knows now that street demonstrations have less and less impact. They end in confusion, in violence against the police and violence of the police against the demonstrators, in imprisonment, etc. The political parties, like the socialist Left, are no more than political movements hampered by struggles for power among the leaders and by differing conceptions of socialism, e.g., Mitterrand and Rocard.

"All of this shows that the unity of the Left, which already from 1920 on, was

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strongly threatened by the very existence of the Communist Party, is now broken. Before 1914, the Left was more of a mass movement, with men who might lead for a while but who were not established party leaders. For example, Jaurès was more of a party organizer than a leader. He organized strike movements, actions in the Chamber of Deputies. But he was not the only one, and he did not always meet with approval. Guesde's role in the party was as important as his, at least at the beginning. In short, the Left was at the same time both diversified and unified. In other words, it was governed by a principle."

Lévy: "How do you mean? I don't follow you at all. What did this unity of the Left before 1914 consist of? Doesn't your turning to the past have something rather mythological about it?"

Sartre: "There was no political unity, but there was a feeling during the entire 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th that the politics of those on the Left derived from a general political and human principle on which their ideas and actions were based. The Left cannot be anything else. But this principle...in fact, what is interesting about this is that since the formation of a Left — I would say from about 1792 until the end of the 19th century — this principle is continuously present, people refer to it, believe in it, but it remains unclear, it is not openly or consciously articulated. People say: I am to the Left, that's all. If people really wanted to do something to restore this unfortunate political Left, which is dead, they would have to try to express this principle, to discover its true nature and how it could exist in a new form today. I think that the Left is dead because the principle that it used had never been clearly stated on paper or in people's minds."

Lévy: "But there wasn't any lack of clarity! The definitions that Marxism gave..."

Sartre: " — Marxism had the principles of the Marxist Left. These principles were presented in *Capital*, and in Marxist works generally. But these were Marxist principles, not simply principles of the Left.

"Marxism appears as a theory, a rigorous theory, or rather, one that was trying to be rigorous, trying to study the facts by deduction and analysis. But, more than this, it grew in a milieu, in an intellectual and emotional atmosphere which was wider than the theory and which, in certain respects, was disappointed by this theory, i.e., the spirit of the Left. When Marx went to speak with German revolutionaries about his doctrines, he discussed things with them, and together they arrived at common decisions. What presided over their agreement, although they never said so, in so many words, was the spirit of the Left — this idea of being together for some collective Left effort."

Lévy: "Ultimately, this principle has to be given a name, this body of ideas has to be designated. Now, you have provided elements that should be adequate — date of birth: 1792; period of development of this body of ideas in its undifferentiated form: 19th century. I think the answer is on the tip of your tongue: you are talking about the spirit of brotherhood of the insurgents of 1793, Michelet and his description of July 14, 1789, the universal brotherhood of Vallès and of the communards."

Sartre: "I won't disagree with you there, but the spirit of brotherhood is not so easy to define."

Lévy: "It functioned as a guiding principle or a point of reference. And yet it has not always been defined in the same way."

Sartre: "True enough, but this is because it has not been sufficiently developed. There is, I think, in the very idea of brotherhood, something that prevents its full development. If you like, the revolutionaries, from 1792 until the Commune, were brothers who at the same time were not brothers, were in a way ashamed of being

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considered brothers. Yet, they claimed brotherhood. And it is this point that must be clarified."

Lévy: "Quite right. Starting with the disintegration of the present. What is actually disintegrating? Let's at least try to determine where we are today with respect to the configuration born in 1792. The death of Leftism necessitates it."

Sartre: "I see another cause for this disintegration: the transformation into parties of elements that before 1914, in a certain way, used to be on the Left. The party system is the death of the Left."

Lévy: "Your opposition to the party system is very equivocal. It's easy to say no to the parties and advocate a pure and simple regression, as you are proposing. But don't stop at 1914, go back to the beginning: to 1792."

Sartre: "Well, to be exact, in 1792 there were no parties."

Lévy: "And yet the worm was in the fruit. You are in fact describing the very movement that brought Leftism to its death. Leftism wanted this, it wanted to turn away from the Communist or Stalinist notion of the party. And it wanted this both by relying on the attitudes deriving from the 19th century and on the forces of opposition on the Left — always a small minority throughout the 20th century. And certainly, Leftism wanted to assert its connection to the *sans culottes* and to the radical attitude of 1793. Remember *La Cause du Peuple* and its ties to 'Father Duchesne' as its accomplice. This is what is disintegrating. The attempt to turn away from the idea of the party through connection with the primal drama of 1793, this is what has died."

Sartre: "Yes, but as a result, the parties that used to think of themselves as being on the Left no longer are. Because what died was the Left's cutting edge."

Lévy: "Certainly. Let's see what is outmoded in the configuration of 1793. We had thought it necessary, against the parties of the Left, to return to radicalism. Like the *sans culottes* who carried to an extreme the initial revolutionary idea of popular sovereignty. All the *sans culottes* needed to do was take to the streets, holding their picks up high and by this act the instituted authorities lost their legitimacy. Sovereignty was regained: in the street. Power is in the street. Not in the National Assembly, not at Versailles, not in the Tuileries. There is something vicious in the dynamics of this process. Yet, we have had a lot of trouble refuting this idea of stand-up sovereignty."

Sartre: "Whatever the case, for myself, radicalism always seemed an essential attitude of the Left. If we reject radicalism, we contribute in no small way to the death of the Left. Yet, from another viewpoint, I realize that radicalism leads to an impasse. That is to say: if we claim that a given action must be radical, must be carried out to its ultimate consequences without taking into account the fact that any action is always in the context of other actions and that these will naturally affect it, we delude ourselves."

Lévy: "We have both said this."

Sartre: "We said this, but we must admit we were mistaken. Our actions must be carried out, but there comes a time when it is possible, given pressure from without, from other actions, that it cannot continue its course unless it is slightly modified, by accepting the participation of other persons. Other acts that were not originally from the same source. In other words, compromises. Then, we will say, if you like, that radicalism is no longer the goal pursued so much as the intention to pursue this goal; intention, as Kantian morality would say, is primary, and it is intention that must be radical. But this does not imply that in the way we have intentionally chosen to accomplish a goal as radicals, that we may not be led to use other means than those we had initially conceived, and that consequently action reaches its goal by differing a

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little from what it was at the start."

Lévy: "Let's summarize. What was meant by radicalism? It involved starting from a hot spot and diffusing this heat across the entire social surface. If there be those who are lukewarm, too bad for them; send the moderates to the guillotine! We say today: there is a hot sector and a cold sector. There can be no question at any price, that is to say, in fact, at the price of perversion, of causing the hot to penetrate areas of cold, the point is rather to differentiate the hot sector and the cold. Rather, you say, and I agree: radicalism, the nucleus of the hot sector, is in the intention that animated the formation of this sector. We will agree also, at least initially, that this intention designates the spirit of brotherhood. In other words, what we are doing is abandoning the idea of a necessary connection between brotherhood and terror. Which, of course, does not mean that there might not be examples of brotherhood-terror."

Sartre: "I suppose so, although one day after we have defined the spirit of brotherhood without terror, we will have to return to the idea of brotherhood-terror."

Lévy: "Let's get back to the idea of intention as the essence of radicalism."

Sartre: "Intention is necessarily, by its very definition, the perception of the goal; thus to say that intention is radical is really to say that it grasps a radical goal. Quite simply, radicalism emanates from the intention itself; it is not an attribute of the goal as such. Here is what I mean: very often, in history, we encounter individuals or social groups that seem to pursue the same goal, which unite, which say the same things, and little by little, it becomes apparent that they are pursuing different goals. The reason was that the intentions were different. They are different because behind what they seem to have in common for the different groups, there are their own truths, and it becomes apparent that what is held in common by all groups is a more or less uncertain concept but not the goal itself."

Lévy: "This is very important. It means that revolutionary coalitions have been, up until now, misunderstandings."

Sartre: "Very often."

Lévy: "So what we are looking for in trying to avoid the idea of a coalition, which may be nothing more than a coalition within the context of a misunderstanding, what we are looking for is a coalition that could really be a coalition of intentions. In other words, to be a radical would mean to pursue in a radical way, to the point of adequate unification, the bringing together of previously disparate intentions."

Sartre: "That's right, to the extent that it is possible."

Lévy: "We were royally mistaken back when we said we had the revolution as our goal, and since one cannot make an omelette without breaking some eggs, in order to arrive at this goal, we had to get our hands dirty. There was a flaw in this reasoning. There is no question of negating the dirt, the shit, the blood. No, the flaw is in the goal, the worm in the fruit. From the point when this confusion about the goal arose, of necessity there had to be, in the question of the goal and the methods, the end and the means, a further confusion, one that could in effect have negative, even criminal, consequences. But if, as we tend to claim today, the goal, that is to say the radically posited intention, moves through history..."

Sartre: "Intention is transhistorical."

Lévy: "Yes."

Sartre: "And in this sense, it does not belong to history. It appears in history, but it does not belong to history."

Lévy: "There is a problem as to the means, the techniques of action that are used, but the problem must henceforth be considered in its subordinate relationship with a transhistorical goal. The goal isn't to take hold of political power, as Lenin thought.

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The fundamental question pertains to the nature of the goal. How exactly should we envision this goal?"

Sartre: "Yes, first we must clarify what transhistorical means and what goal we may speak of, since the takeover of power was a goal within history: power was seized in a particular society, at a particular point, in its development, and this meant that a very particular set of people, whose names were either Louis XVI or Robespierre, depending on the point in time, were disposed of. What is the ultimate goal that has always been that of insurgents or revolutionaries, that they have wanted without being able to name it or see it clearly. That's what we must try to define."

Lévy: "Exactly. Thus there is, in the word brotherhood, which characterizes this confused complex of ideas and emotions designated by the label 'Left,' an element that must be isolated, namely, the intention of brotherhood, the allusion to a true experience of brotherhood. In this regard, we can recognize our ties to the insurgents of 1792. But to conceive of this intention within a radical frame of reference which recognizes sovereignty, mass protest, and direct democracy as opposed to treacherous representative sovereignty — no, that is finished. From now on we must consider that the solution of the insurgents of 1793, and hence of the Leftists, is a false solution. Henceforth, we must confront the problem that is at the heart of the false response, the problem of democracy."

Sartre: "That is to say to study democracy, without considering direct or indirect democracy. Taking it as a whole and seeing what relationship might exist between the spirit of brotherhood and democracy, the primary principle on which democracy is based and which has always been in it. Because, for me, and I think you would agree, democracy seems to me not only a political form of power or of granting power, but a life, a way of life. We live democratically, and, in my view, this way of life and no other must be, at this point, for us, the way for men to live. We must discover whether men do now live in a democracy and democratically, and we must discover what is meant by democracy. I think that, to begin with, the term must be taken such as it is in itself and examined in its political form first, because that would be the simplist way to proceed..."

Lévy: "It is not only the simplest way, it's the only way."

Sartre: "The word democracy has a meaning which by itself has fallen into disuse. It is the government of the people, etymologically. Now it is clearly evident that, in modern democracies, there is no people to take charge of government, because the people do not exist as such. There was a people during the Ancien Régime and in 1793; there is no longer a people now, because it would be impossible to call a people the way of living of men completely individuated by the division of labor, without relationships, other than professional ones, with other men and who, every five or six years, perform the particular act that consists of taking a piece of paper with names on it and putting this paper into a ballot box. I do not think this shows that the people have the power.

"In the 18th century and during the Revolution, there wasn't this fragmentation of life that we see today. Right now, a man who votes does not do it in the same way as a man who lived during the Reign of Terror or before. That is to say that today it is a fragmentary activity, unconnected either with his profession or with his general personal preoccupations. The vote was not at all viewed in this way in 1793. The vote was not a particular act among many in life. It was in reality the act for which one became involved in politics, for which one existed in a sense. The vote changed, and for this reason, we are not getting ahead but rather losing speed with respect to the French Revolution."

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Lévy: "True. Yet it could be said that today, through the already ancient practice of universal suffrage, we have covered the distance that goes from the hot sector to the cold sector. True, the vote began by being hot. Now the vote is cold. But at least the vote allowed this articulation between the hot and the cold, if I may say so. Now that is what we were denying when we yelled: 'Elections, traps for fools.' Isn't there an error in this? Of course, there were moments, there are still moments — for example, just after the Revolution of the Carnations in Portugal, where the first vote was a hot vote. It had been nearly forty years that they had not voted. Now, we know that the vote is going from hot to cold. But, precisely, there's the problem we have to solve — going from hot to cold. I agree, the vote is not the ultimate solution, since gradually it is moving from hot to cold, it's losing its heat. Agreed. But we must refuse the false solution which consists of shouting: 'Hot, hot, hot — down with lukewarm!' Universal suffrage at least has one merit by designating a numerical entity, a complete series: it does not do away with the notion of 'everyone,' without which 'brotherhood' has no meaning."

Sartre: "Let's understand each other. There have always been categories of people whose vote has not been solicited."

Lévy: "Of course; but in that case, precisely, there is an example of good radicalism, of good radicalization: all the struggles carried on in the 19th century, and in a part of the 20th, to radicalize universal suffrage, to bring about the full extension of universal suffrage. In order to give a more effective meaning to the notion of 'everyone.' "

Sartre: "You are right. One might simply wonder what 'everyone' means. What is the true meaning of the right to vote, for example? In other words, what is the relationship between the different men who put their ballot in the box, since the outcome of the vote is a constitution, a law, in short, a certain way of being 'everyone,' as you have said? So what the vote entails is a joining of men among themselves, and this must precede the vote. It is the fact that each man, each voter, lives in a milieu, in a group, with men who subject him to a certain intellectual conditioning, at least in part, by which they coerce him to internalize great general theories that he will express in his vote. Thus there is an original relationship of men among themselves before the vote, without which the vote would not be possible. The men who go to vote are men of the same neighborhood, of the same family, with ideas that they have held in common for a long time; in short, the vote is merely the expression of all that."

Lévy: "Are you repeating what Marx told us — namely, that the vote is an expression of the political man which derives from a more basic expression, that of the concrete social relations of production?"

Sartre: "In a certain sense, except that I do not consider that the primary relationship is that of production. I think that it is indeed primary, with respect to the vote: there are neighborhoods of workers that are established within the city, which include people of the same profession who will vote together. But this is not the most important thing. The deepest relation between men is what binds them together beyond the relations to production. It is what makes them for each other something other than a producer. They are men. That is what must be examined. What does it mean to be human and to be capable, in conjunction with one's neighbor who is also human, of producing laws, institutions, of making oneself, by means of the vote, into a citizen? Marx's differentiation of superstructures is a beautiful study, but it is entirely false, because the primary relationship, man to man, is something else, and it is what we must now discover."

Lévy: "You claim to have found it in *Critique of Dialectical Reason.*"

Sartre: "I was looking for it, but I was looking for something else as well. And

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furthermore, I did not write the second volume. As you know, I turned away from the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* because it appeared that the study had not fully ripened within me. I couldn't carry it through. That is exactly what reason is. And what is important is precisely that, if I consider society as I was considering it in *Critique of Dialectical Reason,* I realize that the spirit of brotherhood does not receive very much attention in it. If, on the other hand, I take society as resulting from a bond between individuals more basic than politics, then I consider that people should have or can have or do have a certain primary relationship, which is the relationship of brotherhood."

Lévy: "Why is the relationship of brotherhood primary? We are all sons from a single father?"

Sartre: "No, but the family relationship is primary with respect to any other relationship."

Lévy: "We belong to a single family?"

Sartre: "In a certain way, we belong to a single family."

Lévy: "What is your conception of this primary kinship?"

Sartre: "It is the fact that, for each of us, birth is to such a degree the same phenomenon, that in a certain way, two men talking to each other have the same mother. Obviously not the same mother empirically. She has no eyes, she has no face; it is a certain idea but one that we both share with each other as well as with anyone else. To be of the same species is to have in a certain sense the same parents. We are brothers, in that sense. And it is in this way, moreover, that people define the human species, not so much by biological features as by a certain relationship which exists between individuals and which is the relationship of brotherhood. Which is the relationship of being born of the same mother. That's what I meant to say."

Lévy: "In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates, who has just defined all the conditions of a just society (each class has its place, and the piece was to all intents and purposes finished), Socrates adds: 'Oh! Rats! . . . I still had something more to say: I don't really want to say it, but I am going to have to: something else is needed, all these people must be led to believe that they are brothers, they must be led to believe that they are all sons from the same mother, and this mother, let's call her Earth. Let's say that, and then people will believe that they are all issued from the same Earth, thus that they are all brothers; there has no doubt been a different alloy used in the composition of each one, which explains why one will be a warrior, another a farmer, another a magistrate; but at bottom they are all brothers.' So the mother, the mother that you allude to, runs the risk of becoming, thanks to a pious or cynical lie, the Earth in the sense that the Greeks gave it, or in the sense of modern times, the nation."

Sartre: "I never understood Socrates' statement as really being a pious lie. He means to say, in reality, that men are brothers. But he does not succeed in saying it properly, in defining the kind of truth that the statement called for. So he makes a myth out of it."

Lévy: "All right. So Socrates' intentions are good. Nonetheless, he encountered a last-minute difficulty that threatened to bring down the entire edifice. How can thought escape this lapse into mythology, when what is involved is the essential character of being together, namely, the notion of brotherhood?"

Sartre: "There is no question of a myth here. The idea of brotherhood is the relationship of the species among its members. Thousands of years ago, the first social division was the clan, characterized by its totem. The totem was something that enveloped the entire clan and which gave to all members of the clan a profound reality in their relations with each other, which, for example, prevented them from

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intermarrying. And that relationship was a relationship of brotherhood. I mean to say, that the large idea of the clan, its sustaining unity, starting with the animal which was believed to have engendered them all, this is what must be recovered today, because it was a true brotherhood; it was a myth, perhaps, in one sense, but it was also a truth."

Lévy: "Are you not duplicating Socrates' pattern of thought — namely, in the face of the difficulty, falling back on a myth?"

Sartre: "No, I don't think so, because what I meant was that the myth is invented by members of the group only in order to acknowledge a relationship between them that is the group relationship. In other words, they are inventing, without knowing that they are inventing, an animal that engendered them all, and consequently they are all brothers. Why? Because they felt initially that they were all brothers. So, after that, an invention gave a meaning to the brotherhood, but it wasn't this invention that conferred on the group a sense of brotherhood. It was precisely the reverse."

Lévy: "But our problem is not to fall back on myth to enunciate this original thought of brotherhood. How will we do it without falling into the trap Socrates fell into?"

Sartre: "We are not falling into the trap: all of us are brothers in the clan in as much as we are born of the same woman, who is represented by the totem. They are all brothers in the sense that all are born from the womb of woman; and at that point the individuality of the woman is not a question. She is simply a woman, with the womb that will engender, the breasts that will nourish, the back that perhaps will carry. This mother can just as easily be a totemic bird."

Lévy: "But you seem to insist on preserving the reference to biological origin; otherwise, one might say 'brotherhood' where one could have said anything else: 'equality,' for example. Yet, in fact, you seemed to be very attached to the idea of brotherhood and no longer, as before, to the idea of equality. So a form of thought which, while preserving the biological reference, deploys itself in an area that is not biological and which isn't mythological must be found."

Sartre: "That's right. So what is this relationship between one man and another, which will be called brotherhood? It is not the relationship of equality. It is the relationship in which the motivations of an act are of an affective order, while the act itself is of a practical order. That is to say that the relationship between the man and his neighbor in a society in which they are brothers is first an affective, practical relationship: it will be necessary to recover this talent. Because, originally, the sensitivity was very common.

"When I see a man, I think: he has the same origin as myself, like me he comes from Mother Humanity, let's say, Mother Earth as Socrates says, or Mother...."

Lévy: "Well, what is the Mother, humanity, Earth? We are still in mythology. Is there a way of breaking out of the mythological frame of reference?"

Sartre: "I think that what is not mythological, what is real, is the relationship of you to me and of me to you. The relationship of man to his neighbor is called brotherhood because they feel themselves to have a common origin. They have the same origin and, in the future, a common end or goal. Origins and goals in common, that is what constitutes their brotherhood."

Lévy: "Are we dealing here with a true experience, one that is conceivable?"

Sartre: "In my view, the whole truly conceivable experience will exist when the goal that all men have in them, Mankind, will be realized. At that point, it will be possible to say that the men that came into being will all have a common origin, not by the organs of reproduction of the mother or the father, but by a series of steps taken over thousands of years, which culminate in Mankind. That will be the true brotherhood."

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Lévy: "I understand. And what prefigures this term today?"
Sartre: "The very fact that there exists a morality."
Lévy: "How can the spirit of brotherhood be described in a contemporary context without falling back on mythology?"
Sartre: "Because ultimately it is in the future. Thus, there is no need to turn to mythology, which is always of the past. Brotherhood is what men will be, with relation to each other, when, across our entire history, they will be able to declare themselves joined together in feeling and in action. Morality is indispensable, which means really that men or pre-men have a future based on the principles of collective action, while at the same time all around them there will be a future based on material things, which means ultimately scarcity. This means both that what I have is yours, and what you have is mine, and if I am in need, you give to me, and if you are in need, I give to you. That is the future of morality. And indeed men have precise needs and the external situation does not allow them to realize these needs. There is always less than is needed, less food than is needed, fewer men even than are needed to create this food. In short, we are surrounded by scarcity, which is a real fact of life. We always lack something.

"There are therefore two attitudes which are both human but which do not seem compatible, and which must both be lived at the same time. There is the effort to realize mankind, to engender mankind: that is the moral question. And then there is the struggle against scarcity."
Lévy: "Whence violence, according to the *Critique of Dialectical Reason.* I wanted to remind you of something which you wrote in the preface to *The Wretched of the Earth:* 'Son of violence, you say about a colonized person, he draws his humanity from it at every moment.' You did not write: 'Son of the mother.' No, 'Som of violence.' It is engendering, productive violence, like that of Engels."
Sartre: "That's not the same thing."
Lévy: "I don't see why not. But here is my question: can humanity engender itself thus through violence? Please understand, the question I am asking is not: Does violence exist or not? Nor am I asking: In certain situations, is violence justified or not? No, my question is more limited: Can violence have such a redemptive role, can it have the instituting role that you attributed to it then?"
Sartre: "If we take the case of Algeria, which I dealt with in *The Wretched of the Earth,* I make the observation in the first place that there was never any question of any other kind of solution than a violent one. The colonists never envisioned a solution that could have been acceptable to the Algerians. There were two absolutely opposite points of view that could only lead to violence. This violence, as you know, led to the expulsion of the colonists, who returned to France."
Lévy: "That was not my question!"
Sartre: "Wait! Certainly, violence won't accelerate the achievement of humanity as such. Violence simply breaks a certain state of enslavement that stands in the way of becoming a man. As soon as violence has eliminated the state of being colonized, that is to say the state of enslavement, what remains are pre-men who no longer suffer from certain constraints, who will find others of another sort, as in Algeria, but who will try, in spite of everything, to approach the state of an active citizen who himself is as far from the true human being as he is from the colonialized pre-man."
Lévy: "You said: their fraternal love is the other side of the hatred they bear toward us. Brothers, in that each of them has killed. Are you no longer of this opinion?"
Sartre: "I am no longer of this opinion."
Lévy: "The question is whether or not the experience of brotherhood can arise

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through work that involves killing the enemy."
Sartre: "No. But to tell the truth, I can't yet see clearly the relationship between violence and brotherhood."
Lévy: "So it is as sons of violence that they are brothers? Or else possibly brotherhood is discovered first, then, in the face of certain obstacles that are insurmountable by any other means, there is no alternative other than to resort to violence. Then some form of limited violence is used, without any ethical finality, which itself emanates from the experience of brotherhood?"
Sartre: "What is needed for there to be a morality is to extend the idea of brotherhood until it becomes a single, unique, obvious relationship between all men, this relationship being in the first place a group relationship, properly speaking, a relationship of small groups tied one way or another to an idea of family. In a remote past, that's what brotherhood is. It is enclosed by the group, and it is precisely the tendency of the other or others to break this group, to transgress this frontier, that binds the brotherhood inward, that produces violence, which is precisely the opposite of brotherhood. That's what I would say today."

III

Levy: "How do you account for the profound tendency, in your work, toward an ethic of violence? How do you account, as an example, for the passion in the preface to *The Wretched of the Earth?*"
Sartre: "In that particular case, it comes from the Algerian war and the war in Indochina, both of which were profoundly horrifying to me. Because, as you know, my only reaction to politics at the age of nineteen was a disgust with colonialism. The only way I could see for getting out of colonialism was violence. This violence that one could call just was that of the colonized against the colonialist."
Lévy: "But you add to that: 'transparency,' 'national unity,' everything important, after all, is produced at gunpoint! When we developed the ethic of violence in *La Cause du Peuple* in an editorial, this position was understandable: we were questioning the problem of military stupidity. But what motivated you?"
Sartre: "That was at a time when I was seeing Fanon, who was very violent: that certainly accounted for the tone of the ideas. There is also the fact that we were in a difficult situation, that, in spite of everything, we were struggling *against* France and *with* some Algerians who didn't like us much, although we were on their side. That put us in a special situation, which is expressed in this text: a situation of 'malaise,' of the greatest violence, with a black-and-white attitude, because that was the simplest one to have. France is something that has meaning for me. It was disagreeable for me to be against my country."
Lévy: "You told me once, concerning this very text as a matter of fact, that, first, you write a rough draft and then, systematically, based on stylistic principles, you revise in order to make the text more violent. Then you go back to Poulou, who was waging war in the living room, sword in hand, while his mother played the piano."
Sartre: "Especially since the young Poulou, you remember, was fighting for himself and against evil opponents."
Lévy: "The new Pardaillon writing the preface of *The Wretched of the Earth.*"
Sartre: "Yes, there is certainly something of that."
Lévy: "Note that, in your writings about the Resistance, you do not praise violence..."
Sartre: "Those who fought in the Resistance and blew up trains and those who were writing were the same people. In the case of the Algerians, it was two different groups

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of people. That is the difference. Whether I blew up railroads or not, we were still all in the same boat."

Lévy: "Under the Occupation, the enemy was brutal, animalistic. Why didn't you elaborate, at that particular time, an ethics of regenerative violence?"

Sartre: "We were ourselves those who, directly or indirectly, were carrying out the violence; and at that time, as I told you, in a France that, in spite of everything, had been taught a profound repugnance for violence before the war. We were among those who liked to say: violence is magnificent, we are justified in doing that. It was necessary to consider murders, bombs blowing up, etc., as something we were forced to do, almost as a necessary evil."

Lévy: "Why did you move from a necessary evil to..."

Sartre: "If to me the Algerians appeared to be less violent than they were, I would then compromise with the other French: I would then be back in France's fold. I found it necessary to see the Algerians as mistreated and crucified by France, who were fighting against France because the French were unjust. And I, since I am French, was unjust like they were because there is a collective responsibility; but, at the same time, I approve, and it is in this respect that I am different from most other French people; I am in favor of these tortured men's fighting against France."

Lévy: "Verbal violence, why national self-flagellation?"

Sartre: "To a certain extent, yes; to a certain extent, certainly."

Lévy: "Our problem today is simple: if the idea of the revolution becomes identified with the idea of terrorism, it is finished. In order to re-establish the meaning of the idea of revolution, it is necessary to reject once and for all the concept of a brotherhood of terrorism. One can of course choose to abandon any idea of a revolution. One can understand it as a costly lyrical illusion. There are two objections to that: the first, a factual one: there are uprisings; the second objection concerns the legitimacy of the uprising. It comes from what we have called social desire [*le désir de société*]. Against the illusion, one which is not lyrical at all, that human unity is realized in the present social state, an uprising presents the really profound question, the question of unification; the unity of the human enterprise is to be created. If Kant was correct in bringing the idea of an ethical community back to the ideal of a human totality, then an uprising is an appeal to an ethical order: the forgotten make themselves heard."

Sartre: "Develop your thought."

Lévy: "I wonder if it would not be necessary to think of the effort of the uprising by distinguishing several elements or periods. Brotherhood appears first at the end of a long maturing process, the event consists of the birth of a relationship lived as human. One can think, of course, of what we have all learned from July 14. But, closer to us in time, Foucault says that he saw the general will in the streets of Tehran. At this moment, the use of certain violent forms is similar to a Caesarian operation: it is a matter of removing an obstacle to birth. To say that brotherhood maintains itself essentially by recourse to violence would mean, in a certain way, that, in order for the child to be born, what is necessary more than the joining of a man and a woman or the maturing of the embryo is the operation of the forceps. It is true, of course, that during revolutionary works a displacement occurs. One saw this clearly in 1968, the birth which constitutes the meaning of the event is no longer the way out, but the confrontation, rupture, in both the social and erotic meaning that Georges Bataille gave it. That is the sacred moment, and the moment of brotherhood in terror."

Sartre: "You forgot that the other — the enemy — acts all the time. That is what provokes the manner in which each of these two moments occurs."

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Lévy: "Be careful about the term 'provokes.' In the first period, for the demonstrator, the policeman or the soldier, it makes little difference which one, is practically a brother like the others. Certainly, in the degree to which he is identified with the obstacle to be eliminated, he is a brother who has gone astray, one can see him as not a brother; but, at any rate, that which is essential in the event is the creation of this brotherhood; this creation gives the immense force, the formation of an almost miraculous force, to the uprising. At that moment, one observes an almost total absence of hatred. Even, I repeat, for the soldier. On the other hand, the second period, the moment of the sacred, since it is then that the rupture becomes essential, there is clearly a kind of connection between the demonstrator and the policeman firing at him. In a certain way, the demonstrator needs his adversary, like two lips need each other, for the rupture. Then, indeed, it is the violence of the repression that confers the necessary unity on the demonstrators, the unity that permits them to be like parts of one body. They no longer know if they are brothers or if they are brothers only in so much as they attack the soldier. Is it the adversary who confers unity upon them, or did the demonstrators undertake a unilateral positive unification? The two things are merged from that moment on.

"The idea, then, that the unity of the uprising is created by the confrontation, that the insurgents become brothers against the Other, the compact enemy, is obviously going to bring about the radicalization that we were criticizing a little while ago, a kind of revolutionary Machiavellianism that will try to provoke the enemy in order to reinforce the unity of the insurgents. But this particular idea of unity, doesn't it already indicate the degeneration of the fraternal experience? There are factions that tear at each other, inertia, powerlessness to resolve long-hidden problems; at this point, one uses the perfect weapon: hate for the Other — for the aristocrats in 1789 or for the Americans in Iran. In reality, the positive undertaking of unification has stopped and recourse to this form of negative unity produced by attacking the former power is a way of hiding this degeneration. That is the perverted application of revolutionary politics."

Sartre: "Which is the third period."

Lévy: "Yes. In this context, Leninism is a good example. It refers to the positive experience; that is one side of the question. But it functions completely as a result of the negative unity. For Lenin, it is a matter of constructing an iron unity in response to the unity of power. At the moment when the creation of a positive unification begins to lose steam, Leninism is terrifyingly efficacious.

"Did we not catch a glimpse of something else in 1968? Did we not see the fact that it is necessary to think of human assemblies at a time when there is a lack of power?

"What does that mean? That we should reject power? Certainly not. Should we consider that power is absolute evil and that one should keep away from it? Absolutely not. No, it is simply the essential comprehension that, as far as power in the political sense is concerned, a vacuum has been created. That this power is not founded. That is the marvelous revelation of the first period of the uprising. It is that which makes the revolutionary say: 'Everything is possible.' And it is true, in a sense, that everything is possible. How is it possible to keep this realization from succumbing to political hysteria? Perhaps it is necessary to answer, by not making it an absolute. The uprising is only a moment in the long enterprise of human unification, only one facet of the fraternal experience. Of our relationship with the mother, you would say."

Sartre: "I agree in general with the three periods in which you categorize the appearance of violence. I would simply like to have a more complete description of the first two periods, and even of the third. But we will do this in the book that we will

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dedicate to a study of moral thought. For the moment, I can only approve without reservation, because I will express my reservations at that time."

Lévy: "Perhaps not enough attention has been paid to the significance of a certain Jewish distrust of the revolutionary mob. Perhaps we've not wondered enough about how much truth this distrust conceals. Was the Jew able, especially if he lived in a Christian society, to get an inkling of the mob of the pogrom under the surface of the revolutionary mob? In a way, hasn't he experienced the perversion that we are now trying to criticize?"

Sartre: "Don't forget that there were a considerable number of Jews in the Communist Party of 1917. In a sense, one could say that it is they who led the revolution. Thus there is something that seems incorrect in what you are saying."

Lévy: "I am speaking, of course, of the Jew who remained Jewish. The Jew who knows that he is threatened when a crowd considers itself to be a mystical body. Thanks to his experience, he is not able to make the common people a pure example of rebellion. He is able, on the contrary, to discriminate between what comes from brotherly truth in a revolutionary moment and what comes from the sacred and its terrorist threats. Doesn't that bring us to conclude that Jewish experience is essential in a reconsideration of revolution and that it is necessary to consider this experience in full. The Jew is doubly concerned by our problem. First, he must recognize, in spite of all of its perversions, that the Messianic idea, despite its perversions, is at the base of the revolutionary idea. And on the other hand, he is in the front ranks as far as suffering from the perversions of this idea is concerned. From this arises the task of understanding this idea correctly, of restoring its meaning."

Sartre: "That is quite possible. You felt that way about it, and I think that other

Lévy: "From this viewpoint, the present intellectual situation is dangerous. Everything is happening as if, more or less everywhere, Messianism was being made the source of all our ills. When the 'New Right' makes Messianism its target, it is doing its proper work. The most serious problem is that it is also 'correct' to attack all Messianisms from the Left, too. But has one wondered what Messianism, Hebrew Messianism, was, exactly? No, everyone acts as if they knew. When will we recognize that we don't know and that it is crucial for us to know? Can we forget that ignorance is at the basis of the anti-Jewish filth?"

Sartre: "For me, Messianism was an idea with no meaning at the time I was writing *Anti-Semite and Jew*. If it has taken on a rich significance for me today, it is in part because of our conversations which have made me understand what it meant to you."

Lévy: "At the time of this writing, you thought that the Jew was an anti-Semitic invention — to put the issue provocatively. At any rate, there was not any Jewish thought, there was no Jewish history. Have you modified your views?"

Sartre: "No. I keep that as a superficial description of the Jew such as he is in the Christian world for example, when he is nabbed, at every street corner, by anti-Semitic thought which devours him and which tries to formulate him and capture him in his most profound being. The Jew is certainly a victim of anti-Semitism. I limited this to the existence of the Jew. Even though I knew some of them. At the present, I think that there is a Jewish reality beyond the ravages of anti-Semitism against the Jews, there is a profound Jewish reality like there is a profound Christian reality. Very different, of course, but of the same kind in relation to certain groups. The Jew considers himself as having a destiny. I should explain how I arrived at this idea."

Lévy: "I was going to ask."

Sartre: "It was by getting to know a number of Jews after the Liberation. Before, I

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knew some, of course, but I had no deep relationships with any of them. After the Liberation I knew Claude Lanzmann, who has become an excellent friend. After that, I adopted my daughter, Arlette, who is Jewish, and I know how she thinks and then I met you; we have worked together, and we have also had some more relaxed moments of daily life together. Therefore, I now have a much better view of Jewish preoccupations. That is what has changed, basically. Up until the time of the "Jewish Question," I was essentially hostile to anti-Semitism. The 'Jewish Question' is nothing other than a declaration of war on anti-Semitism."

Lévy: "When I read *Anti-Semite and Jew* at the age of seventeen, the book served as an admirable justification for my desire to battle anti-Semitism. But, at the same time, you assured me that if this battle should be victorious, I would discover what I dreamt of discovering: that I am a man, not a Jew. The book also legitimated a form of self-denial. I didn't think that then, mind you."

Sartre: "That is quite possible. You felt that way about it and I think that other people have felt the same way. That is, that there was no Jewish reality. Note that this kind of reality, which is basically metaphysical, like Christian reality, took up little room in my philosophy at the time. There was the conception of the self, which I deprived of all the individual characteristics that would have come from the interior and which I found for it subsequently on the exterior. Thus deprived of metaphysical and subjective traits, the Jew could exist in my philosophy only as such. At present, I see men differently. I have been curious enough to try to find out what the Jewish reality could be from the interior. But I have had to face the fact that, in order to understand the Jew from the interior, I would have to be him."

Lévy: "But how were you able to do it with Gustave Flaubert?"

Sartre: "Because Flaubert gave me many more details than a Jew does. Most of the important things about Jews are written in foreign languages, in Hebrew usually, sometimes in Yiddish."

Lévy: "Perhaps you would have been able to overcome this obstacle."

Sartre: "Hebrew is not a definitive obstacle for a Frenchman: he has only to learn it. But there is a considerable time lapse between the moment when he begins and the moment when he reads the books that matter to him. For that reason, I could not pursue my knowledge of the Jewish reality to its conclusion, but I can see some principles, some beginnings, that could lead me there."

Lévy: "But when you wrote the *Anti-Semite and Jew*, surely you collected some documentation."

Sartre: "No."

Lévy: "How can that be?"

Sartre: "Never. I wrote the 'Jewish Question" without any documentation, without reading a Jewish book."

Lévy: "But how did you do it?"

Sartre: "I wrote what I thought."

Lévy: "But beginning with what?"

Sartre: "Beginning with nothing, beginning with the anti-Semitism I wanted to fight."

Lévy: "You could have opened any book, the one that I just read, for example, *The History of Israel* by Baron. That would have kept you from writing that there is no Jewish history."

Sartre: "I realize from reading Baron's book that it would not have changed my viewpoint at that time."

Lévy: "Why not?"

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Sartre: "Because, at the moment when I said that there is not any Jewish history, I was thinking of history in a well-defined form: the history of France, the history of Germany, the history of America, of the United States. That is, the history of a sovereign, political reality with a homeland and with other similar states. When one should have thought of history as being something else, if one meant that there is a Jewish history. It was necessary to conceive of Jewish history not only as a dissemination of Jews throughout the world, but also as the unity of this diaspora, the unity of the dispersed Jews."

Lévy: "The Jew, then, in his profound reality, can be disconnected from the philosophy of history."

Sartre: "Precisely. The philosophy of history is not the same if there is a Jewish history or if there is not. There is a Jewish history. That is obvious."

Lévy: "In other words, the history that Hegel put on our landscape wanted to get rid of the Jew, and it is the Jew who will allow us to get out of this history that Hegel wanted to impose on us."

Sartre: "Absolutely, because that proves that there is a real unity of Jews in history, and this real unity is not due to a grouping in a historic homeland, but to acts, to writings, to ties that do not pass through the idea of a fatherland, or which have been related to a homeland since only a few years ago."

Lévy: "Where, in your opinion, does the unity of the Jewish reality come from?"

Sartre: "That is precisely what I have tried to understand. But, having considered it carefully, I think the essential Jewish quality is that, for several thousands of years, he has had a relation with a single god, he is monotheistic, and that is what distinguishes him from all former peoples: they all had many gods, and it is that which has given him his essence and autonomy. His relationship with God was, moreover, very special. Gods, of course, has always had relationships with men; Jupiter had relationships with men, slept with women, became a man when he wished; therefore, there is nothing new about it.

What is new is the way in which that God related to men. The relationship which characterizes Jews is with what was called the Word, that is to say, God. God speaks to the Jew, the Jew hears his word and, through all that, the reality is the primary metaphysical connection of the Jew with the infinite. That, I believe, is the primary definition of the ancient Jew, the man who has his whole life determined, controlled in a way, by his relationship with God. And the whole history of the Jews consists precisely of this primary relationship.

"For example, the great event that changed the life of the Jews considerably, which made of them in general people who suffered — exiles or martyrs — was the appearance of Christianity, that is, of another religion with a single God. There have been, therefore, two monotheisms and the second one — although inspired from the first and taking the Bible as a sacred text — has not for that reason been less constantly hostile to the Jewish people."

Lévy: "Tell me: in what way does this relationship to a single god, this Israeli destiny, concern you?"

Sartre: "But it is not the Word that has a meaning for me, either. The essential thing is that the Jew lived and that he is still living metaphysically."

Lévy: "It is the metaphysical character of the Jew, then, that interests you?"

Sartre: "It is his metaphysical character, which came by way of the religion."

Lévy: "Of course. That, then, is what interests you?"

Sartre: "That. But it is also the fact that he has a destiny."

Lévy: "It's the same thing, isn't it?"

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Sartre: "It is not quite the same thing. That means something quite precise. The Jewish religion implies an end to this world and the appearance at the same time of another one, another world that will be made from this one but where things will be organized differently. There is also another theme I like: dead Jews and the other dead, as well, will be resurrected, will come back to the Earth. Contrary to the Christian conception, they do not have — the present Jewish dead — any existence other than the tomb, and they will be born again as living in this new world. This new world is the end."

Lévy: "In what way does that interest you?"

Sartre: "The finality toward which every Jew moves more or less consciously, but which is ultimately supposed to reunite humanity, it is this social and religious end that only the Jewish people...."

Lévy: "One can see how you could be sensitive to the idea of the end of human prehistory that you found in Marx; it gave consistency to your thought about the individual project. But in what way does this Jewish Messianic end interest you today?"

Sartre: "Precisely because it does not have a Marxist quality, that is, the quality of a defined end beginning with a situation that is present and projected into the future, with stages that will make it possible to attain by developing certain facts today."

Lévy: "Can you clarify this point?"

Sartre: "The Jewish end has nothing of that. It is, so to speak, the beginning of the existence of men for each other. That is to say, a moral end. Or, more precisely, it is morality. The Jew thinks that the end of the world, and the appearance of the other, means the arrival of the ethical existence of man."

Levy: "Yes, but the Jew does not wait for the end of the world as you describe it in order to accept an ethic."

Sartre: "We, too, the non-Jews, have a search for the ethical. It is a matter of finding the final goal; that is to say, the moment when morality will be simply the way of life of men in relationship to each other. The rules and commands which morality has at present, it will probably no longer have; that has often been said before, of course. It will be the way of forming thoughts, feelings...."

Lévy: "Yes, but the Jew thought that there could be a transcendence — if one can still use that word with innocence — of the law, going above, not below. It is not by putting aside the rules, as you say, thinking according to rules, that this end — the abolition of rules — will be prepared. Modern man has claimed to get around rules by going under them. By transgression, or by decreeing that any conception of the law was obsolete."

Sartre: "Absolutely. It is for that reason, of course, that Messianism is an important thing that Jews alone have conceived of in this manner, but which could be used by the non-Jews for other goals."

Lévy: "Why other goals?"

Sartre: "Because the goal of the non-Jews with whom I am associated is revolution. And what is meant by that? The suppression of the present society and its replacement by a more just one where men will be able to have good relationships with each other. This idea of revolution is now very old."

Lévy: "One of two things will happen. Either you will rediscover...."

Sartre: "The revolutionaries wish to create a society that would be more satisfying and humane; but they forget that a society of this kind is not a society of fact. It is, one could say, a society of right. In other words, a society in which the relationships between men are moral. Now this idea of ethics as the final goal of the revolution can be best conceived of as a kind of Messianism. There are enormous economic problems,

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of course; but contrary to Marx and the Marxists, these problems are not crucial. The solution of these problems is, in certain cases, a way of reaching true relationships between men."

Lévy: "Don't forget that the Jew has a long history of false Messianisms: the joining together of the Jew and the Leftist, even assuming the redefinition of the latter, is not automatic."

Sartre: "However, the Jewish reality ought to remain in the revolution. This reality ought to bring it moral force."

Lévy: "In summary — because we must stop — you are beginning over at the age of seventy-five?"

Sartre: "To be honest, one thing has happened to me twice in my life, that is, the temptation of despair. The first time was in 1939-45; I was outgrowing my youth, I was not in politics, I was busy with literature, I lived with my friends, I was happy, my life was taking form. The war came and, little by little, especially after the defeat and the German occupation, I felt completely robbed of the world I had thought was before me: I found myself confronted with a world of misery, evil and despair. But I refused this possibility of despair, which was so common around me, and I allied myself with friends who were not in despair, who thought that we could fight for a happy future, even though there was no possibility that this future would exist. We could fight back, of course, but the outcome of the war was out of our hands, in the hands of the English, the Americans. At that time, I felt the non-existence, the daily banality that threatened each Frenchman and threatened me; and if I believed, in spite of everything, in the withdrawal of Nazi power and in the end of the war, it is because of something in me — hope — which has never been absent for very long. Then the war stopped. From that moment, I have always had a happy life, but strongly punctuated with debates, causes to defend, with thoughts that sometimes threatened despair, as in the period of the Korean War, but which picked up quickly. And then, little by little, something began to go wrong once again. In 1975, I was still a person who had been moved by May '68 and who, basically, was trying to associate his ideas with the ideas of the '68ers without too many contradictions. And then the international situation became what it is now, that is, a victory for rightist ideas, in the governments at least, of almost every nation."

Lévy: "Do you put the Soviet Union among the rightists?"

Sartre: "Of course. And the Americans, the Swedish..."

Lévy: "The Swedish?"

Sartre: "Yes. Their new government is to the Right, while for many years Sweden was on the Left. It was a peculiar society besides, one that we Marxists could not accept because it was socialist without being Marxist. That seemed suspicious to us. In summary, all nations today have a victorious Right. On the other hand, the Cold War seems to be coming back to life. The invasion of Afghanistan is a particularly troubling fact. A third world war is not impossible, and for causes that are all bad, all mis-conceived. This planet now belongs to the poor, on the one hand, who are extremely poor, who are dying of hunger, and to the small number of wealthy on the other side, who are beginning to become less wealthy, but who are clearly part of the affluent group more or less.

"With this third world war, which is going to break out one day, with this miserable ensemble that our planet is, despair returns to tempt me again: the idea that we will not ever finish it, that there is not any goal, that there are only individual goals for which people struggle. People start small revolutions, but there is not a goal for humanity, there is nothing that interests mankind, there are only disruptions. It is

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possible to think something like that. This thought tempts us endlessly, especially when you are old and can think: well, at any rate, I will die within at most five years — in fact, I believe it will be ten years, but it could indeed be five. At any rate, the world seems ugly, bad, and without hope. That is the tranquil despair of an old man who will die within it. But that is precisely what I resist, and I know that I will die in hope; but it is necessary to create a foundation for this hope.

"We must try to explain why the world, now, which is so horrible, is only a moment in a long historical development, that hope has always been one of the dominant forces of revolutions and uprisings, and why I feel hope once again as my conception of the future."

A SPLENDID LIFE

by Rossana Rossanda*

Five years ago he was victim of a first attack. From that time on the pain did not leave him alone: in the arm, in the head, in the eyes. This little body whose homeliness had such a high significance had become a shooting range where only the most noble part, the memory, managed to remain intact and resisted. After each subsequent attack he started living over as before. "I see very well," he told me cheerfully three years ago in Rome, because he distinguished my shadow from that of the director of the *Manifesto* in the lobby of the hotel — the hotel where he always returned when torrid August weather hit, forcing the tourists to flee. "Where do we eat any better?" he asked again last year when his arm was having trouble getting his *rigatoni*, which he loved so much, to his mouth, slightly deformed by paralysis.

Of all the intellectuals of this century, Sartre was the one who spared himself the least. Usually an intellectual "manages": first, he has an intuition that he grasps and refines; he knows himself as a man of one idea, enlivens it and builds a self identity from it. For Lukacs, it was *History and Class Consciousness* and *The Destruction of Reason* — two moments of the communist revolution, at its birth and at its transformation into a positivist religion. For Marcuse it was *Eros and Civilization* and *One-Dimensional Man*. But anyone who wrote that Sartre was *Being and Nothingness* and *Critique of Dialectical Reason* rather than *The Communists and Peace, The Ghost of Stalin, Flaubert* or *La Cause du Peuple* would be wrong.

Several years ago, his old friend, who became his adversary, Raymond Aron, wrote the most accurate book on Sartre the theoretician. "It is all true, it is all true," said Sartre cheerfully. "What a careful book! Have you read it? As for myself, I did not read all of it." He went like this through the innumerable books and essays about himself, reading them out of kindness towards their authors, but not without a certain boredom. He hardly re-read his work because he was always supposed to be writing, i.e., grasping and working with words, a piece of the living, as present, as history as an embryo of the dawning future. What he had written was gone: memorized but gone. No one quoted Sartre less than he did.

Usually an intellectual "manages" his production. Not so with Sartre. He wrote a stream of works which he never finished, first volumes which announced a second,

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seconds leading to a third: there was never a temptation to digress which he did not succumb to. He accumulated them all, because they were that very real which broke every attempt at putting things in order: the movement of life which was knocking at the door. His gesture was word and morality, and his movement was movement of one and many consciences. That is why he appropriated all forms of discourse, whether the essay, the novel or the drama. He spoke, conversed and burned himself out. Only one work, brief and fulminating, reaches the completeness of the accomplished form: *Les Mots* where one could find all that was to follow in the thousands of pages of his last work on Flaubert.

Usually intellectuals re-examine their political positions, decide if and when they must become involved or withdraw, conscious of becoming open to challenges and at the same time going on the offensive, to the bitterness, to the point of saying: "I was an instrument. I was wrong." Not so with Sartre the man of commitment. Until the war he had never had time to look at the world. In it, he was to discover culture and man. The war and the prison in Germany succeeded in bridging the gap that had not been closed even during the days of the Popular Front. From that time on he never ceased to involve himself, in the sense that he never ceased to live surrounded by the big issues of the world. To live only for himself would have seemed to him the ultimate in boredom: intellectually degrading.

After the war, he attempted to form a small political group. It failed. He founded a journal and gravitated for a long time to the left of the Communist Party: better, of the communist movement. The PCF gave him nothing but senseless anger. He was nevertheless expecting the international communist movement to insert itself in history, with its grandeur and embarrassing low-points, of our century. He stood at the Communists' side during the Cold War, going as far as to break with Camus for them and, even more serious, with Merleau-Ponty: "The one who thinks that he can find refuge on the Galapagos, when the world is dividing itself in two, is crazy." In 1952 all it took was the bourgeoisie's attempts to liquidate the Communists to bring him to the their side: he did not need the assurance that the militants were following a just party.

In 1956, in *The Ghost of Stalin*, he wrote a sentence that the PCF never forgave him for: "The party of those being executed became that of the executors." In a sea of pages, which are a French re-reading of the most perceptive and emotional pages of Isaac Deutscher, he participated in the reconstruction of the terrible history of the years following October: the revolution absolved — according to him — by misery and scarcity.

As a matter of fact, he then came back to the Communists. If he associated more willingly with the Italian than with the French Communists, it was only because the French were not as easy to associate with. He used the phone with the coquettry of a free man to ask me in Rome: "What do you think of this? Can I allow *Dirty Hands* back on stage, won't that make a scandal?" But when Algeria exploded, he was on Algeria's side, listening to no one but the Algerians. Then there was Vietnam, and the defense of the oppressed's cause — always of those who were supposed to free themselves, but could not. He was a pacifist because he was an anarchist: war prevents man from fighting. His Marxism was made up of lectures here and there, reconstructed from the tumultuous procession of men and masses pushed by need. And need, for him, was complex need, closer to culture and the search for self-identity rather than the struggle to survive. But in the name of this tumult, the only reality that matters, he trusted Fanon concerning the Third World: he did not scorn anything that could bring about, within coexistence, discussion, understanding, and the break-up of preset schemes.

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In 1968 his hope in communist effectiveness was completely gone. Then there was the Prague Spring, a China he didn't like, and the May events. I don't know. In 1973, in talking of the periods in his life, he tended to step back into the past which was not a noisy rupture with the communist movement, but rather the end of a sometimes parallel trajectory. It meant the unhappy realization of the impossibility of going from his libertarian specificity to a form that, although organized, never incited him to join the party, of which he preferred to remain a fellow traveler. Because one is not a communist alone: he never stopped saying it. In May 1968 this distancing was completed. But it was completed in a strange way.

Sartre, the anarchist, the libertarian, found himself mixed with the assemblies, among those very few who were not chased from the Sorbonne. He was with the movement, although he perceived that the movement was young and he was not Young meant full of imagination, and anti-intellectualism. He was not like that. In his awareness of being an intellectual he never compromised. In *Words*, his self-criticism of the intellectual was the epitome of intellectualism. He was able to say of himself that the intellectual was the person who, when another person acts, writes a book. But he did not feel either as a parasite or as a policeman. When Benny Lévy, who was still a leader of the proletarian Left and of young Maoists, asked him: "Flaubert, what's the use?" he responded: "Perhaps nothing today; today you don't have the time, you can't understand it, I write for tomorrow. Tomorrow I will be read."

He never really agreed to discuss his intellectual being with someone who was not himself an intellectual. But he never followed the rules of the intellectual. Still uncertain in 1968, shortly thereafter he put all of his money in *La Cause du Peuple* and from that time on never left the movement, the only one at the time, whether he identified himself with it or not. Ready to question everything and to re-examine all, outside of that which he definitely classified, he transformed thought into a pure form. I still recall how, two years ago, he dismissed, with a sweep of his already weak hand, the "new philosophers" so well placed, so elegant, so aristocratic, and so dead. A couple of years before he would have hit them with one of his rare blows — rare because he was aware of the complexity of error and was never mean, even against his adversaries. What of his errors? Nobody had known as many political defeats, but the defeats are only defeats for those who see politics as an investment: if it does not bring any returns, they are in crisis. Sartre conceived of politics as a flux which takes away history as soon as it becomes solidified.

This is why he never "administered" anything, even in his own life. Neither love, nor friendship nor money. He had loved several women that he knew he had attracted not by his appearance, but by what he was, and whom he never abandoned, reserving for each one a part of his days and of himself. Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre were a couple who went through the century with a total and loyal friendship. With his friends he had great affinities and great breaks. Then the young arrived, the others who were to become the protagonists of tomorrow; that they were not like him was not important; he always gave them his aid, listened to them and followed them in all they undertook. For him, money was not important, except for them: for the networks, the defectors' committee, *La Cause du Peuple, J'accuse, Liberation.* And although he was already very sick, he rushed to Germany to see Andreas Baader. Rare are those who had the opportunity to offer him something, even if just a meal. This scandalized him. In 1960, a little Italian town, Omegna, had granted him its "Premio della Resistenza" for his support of Algeria. He came to Italy at his own expense. He spoke in a dark dance hall in November, while the valley, flouting the prohibitions of regional authorities, had lit fires on all the towers of the area. The next day he called me:

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"Listen, I received a check for one million. It is probably no good. Can I throw it away?" "What, throw it away? It is the prize you were given last night." — "But I thought it was not for real. I don't want this money, what am I supposed to do with it now?" He gave this prize to the Omegna City Hall for the partisans' families, the day-care centers and others which I don't remember. He asked that half of the money be sent to the defectors' committee. He died without much money. Nothing having to do with money excited him, except to give it to others or to see the world.

This man was my friend, and master, the closest, perhaps, of these last years. As death was approaching, and it had been approaching for a long time, taking each time a little piece of him, and defying him to be whole again — we learned to read him as he read himself — as a spirit who grasped the world and fought in it, indifferent to theory except as an instrument of work and interpretation. All of his books gave us dazzling, fulminating intuitions. The mark of his thought was freedom. The least skeptic that one could imagine, the most projected onto the frail bridges between infinitely fragmented analysis and utopia. And on this frail bridge he threw himself right up to the end, risking his neck, constructing, sweeping and throwing. At the end he did not share with a young man his most perfect thought, but also his most tormented and uncontrollable ones, his pain and his difficulty to dominate the real. He lived and died running, generously, jumping over all obstacles, falling, getting back up and re-thinking, questioning everything. A splendid life.

WE ALREADY MISS HIS VIGILANCE...

by Jean Daniel*

I was not one of his friends. Thus I will speak of him. I understand the silence of the Sartrians today. I also agree with those who, not finding it useful to deny their disagreements, refuse to express them at the moment of his death. But with him, I was, we were, in an undefined, undefinable situation: we never finished our dialogue, even when there was no response from him, even when we expected nothing from him, even when we needed to seek elsewhere a directive more in agreement with us. It is only today that we can really understand what he wrote when Camus died and which at the time appeared to us fraternal but restrained: that a quarrel was nothing else but another way of living together. On the condition, of course, that the intensity of the sorrow was obsessive. And, in fact, we were evidently obsessed by Sartre. Even when he appeared to us to be led astray in the deployment of his dialectical genius, we felt the most lively need for reaction and exchange. And when, finally, the communication between us became warm again, it was as if we recovered the totality of our closeness. As if, previously, up until now, it had been mutilated.

I have often asked myself why, however distant from his milieu, however at the time rejected by a few of his disciples, I nevertheless wished for and asked for Sartre's sponsorship, despite the fact that we had all founded *Le Nouvel Observateur*. More specifically, the sponsorship of Sartre and of Mendès-France. I can suddenly see clearly that I wanted to re-establish the interrupted dialogue between Camus and

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Sartre, and it was also in this sense that he understood it: to support those of his friends that I had reunited, but also to be alert toward my position known beforehand to be Camusian. I know now, I was to have a thousand indications subsequently, that the only thing preoccupying me, was to put him in a position where people as diverse as us, as his friends and mine, might ceaselessly discuss revolution, revolt, and violence. And when a month ago, I heard this very sonorous voice on the telephone, a voice strongly nasal but clearly articulated, which told me of his satisfaction to see his last text published in our 800th issue of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, the precise memory he had of his collaboration with the first number, the desire he had to see us by coming here, in the paper's offices, I had the impression of having well accomplished a forgotten and nonetheless essential duty, to have realized an old dream. As if the few intuitions that we believed here to be modest, but strong and worthy of struggle, were finally receiving, and in a testimonial manner, the recognition of the most vast, the most fertile, the most valiant, and also the most generous intelligence that this century has produced.

In the coteries, they are indignant that this scandalous man is everywhere praised, adulated, celebrated, embalmed — hence "recuperated." It is the same old tune — they chant it each time complacently. Others observe that this solitary harbinger of the avant-garde and of marginality has become recuperable and that he died with some ideas that were no longer scandalous: kindness toward Swedish socialism, interest in Italian radicalism, hostility toward Soviet totalitarianism, uneasy affection toward the State of Israel, tragic feeling that we were at the eve of a possible war, etc. Both sides have gone astray. For nothing has been able to tame that virtue which he kept intact until the end and which remained the most scandalous: hatred of the bourgeoisie. It marks out, dots, truly inundates his work, especially blossoming in this unknown and unfinished masterpiece, *L'Engagement de Mallarmé*. But what is happening at this moment has nothing to do with recuperation: it is a celebration of a rite. I, myself, don't believe that he would have refused it. It was not a question of honors: nothing which resembled the Legion of Honor or even the Nobel Prize. It has nothing to do with the spectacle, the exhibition, the show. When an entire people identifies for a moment with a man, in a privileged and suspended moment, when projected out of their class by ritual, the different components of the nation reunite this people, giving it thus its completeness, then the praise rendered becomes a rediscovered ceremonial. We witness the making of a myth. It is one of the manifestations of the sacred. The most irreligious monster of the French elite since Gide arouses at the moment of his departure the most irrational tremors.

A tremor which is also perhaps the fear of the void. For he was there, gigantic, omnipresent, tentacular, tirelessly available and infinitely eager: all the curiosity and fraternity of the world took refuge in this face and body of touching ugliness and of a strange and contagious strength. His place suddenly deserted, it is then that it appears immense, and no one dreams of occupying it. No one is taking over, no one is continuing. The extraordinary French singularity, its reassuring tradition of master thinkers, has been interrupted. Sartre occupied that position with great ease, with a sovereign simplicity, expressing himself in all genres, growing in all the workmanship or noble rites of the craft of writing. A prodigious juggler, tormentor, mover of words and ideas — which come sometimes themselves from other words. The classic instinct of the ellipse, the gift of baroque prolixity, the sense of the striking metaphor, and the semantic translation of perfumes and flavors; without mentioning the art of theatrical dialogue, polemical pugnacity, philosophical and pamphleteering inspiration: decidedly he had all at his disposal. *The Words*, one of his masterpieces, is already

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assured of posterity, as is the *Situations*, which are his Legend of the century. Anyway, the fact is by seeing the disarray of each and all, we were reassured to know that he was among us, although silent and although declining: we leaned on his statue while it was not yet of stone. To tell the truth, for some of us the fear of the void had already begun a few years ago. Some followers, more respectful of the temple than of the living god, seemed to have become dizzy in seeing the architect revising because of his disenchantments, himself cracking the walls that were sheltering them. It is difficult to accept that Sartre, himself, is like everybody else a "useless passion." Since he was not preoccupied with the cult around him, we would discover, that there is only grandeur in the decision that came to him one day to face himself without indulgence. Being someone for him was to be able to be anyone. At any moment.

Let us therefore return to this concept of violence where our obsessions originate. Something exceptional has just happened. Since the coup of Kabul, the ideological campaign launched from Moscow, Havana, and Paris, make us live again in 1952, date of the famous polemic between Camus and Sartre. One must eagerly consult these great texts: twenty-eight years later they have not aged. Their presence is — how would I put it? — heart-breaking. But the vivacity and the wealth of the exchange incites, stimulates, questions. What was it all about? To decide if all imperialisms could be equated: if communism and fascism were the same thing; if the global criticism of the Soviet Union was opposed to the progress of history and the eternal struggle of the slave against the master. At the present hour, this would amount to deciding if the intervention in Afghanistan is only a detour in the advance of history, if the Soviet Union remains nevertheless, and even thanks to that, the refuge of the wretched of the earth; and if, for example, the East Germans and the Cubans are right, the former to shoot, the latter to spit on those of their comrades, who in fleeing from the regime "vote with their feet" against it.

It is thus a problem which sometimes tires Parisian intellectuals (they find it "old-fashioned"), but which concerns the fate and destiny of millions of revolutionaries in the world. We must remind the revolutionaries who sometimes come to France to pursue their education that what Sartre was saying to Camus in 1952 he was less convinced of in 1968, and not at all in 1976.

All this happened with the discovery — already! — of the concentration camps in the Soviet Union. They were not called the Gulag yet. But we knew all about them; yes, all. To reread the documents and debates of this epoch is to be confused that we had to wait for Solzhenitsyn to reorient our fundamental behavior and options. In short, in the 40s and 50s, we discussed the camps and their relevance. Outside of the Communists and their most zealous fellow travelers, no one doubted their existence. Not Sartre, in any case, who deplored them, condemned them, denounced them. The question was: are the concentration camps sufficient to judge a country, a regime, a solidarity? To answer that question, the most prestigious of the editors of *Les Temps Modernes* after Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, built an entire intellectual system: with a book *Humanism and Terror* which became the bible of the Sartrians, and in general of all progressives. Even those who had not read this book referred to its arguments. It is summed up as follows: "Fascism is exactly like a mimicry of bolshevism. Single party, propaganda, state justice, state truth, fascism owes everything to bolshevism except the essential, that is to say, the theory of the proletariat." Theory of the proletariat? It is Marx's: the mission of the proletariat is to lead humanity by begetting violence toward the Hegelian kingdom of the happy consciousness, which becomes in Marx that of the classless society.

What Merleau-Ponty says and what Sartre will use against Camus is that it is not

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violence which is the significant common denominator between fascism and communism. "Liberalism" is equally violent, and, in this case, we must repudiate and condemn all regimes: in a word, to live out of history, which is futile. The Kantian principle according to which man must be treated as an end and not as a means derives from an illusory idealism; we see everywhere and always that man is a wolf to man. Politics, say Merleau-Ponty and Sartre, is terrorism: to try to escape it is frivolous. One cannot escape from history. All political regimes thus are equal in the sense that they are all based on violence; but we must decide with particular attention whether the regime which, founded on violence, has nevertheless the suppression of its own violence as an end. This becomes important in the case of Communist regimes and the Soviet Union. In other words, if the Gulag were instituted so that there might not be any more Gulags, it would not be justified but tolerated. Tolerated with a heavy heart, but with the certainty of being in the right direction of history. But how can one perceive the necessity of an historical "detour"? When does one know that violence really seeks to suppress itself?

Answer: when this violence is "proletarian." The Marxist philosophy of history shows that where there is proletarian violence there is also so-called "progressive" violence. It is proletarian violence which must put an end to the master-slave dialectic, to accelerate the advent of the "Homogenous and universal State," according to Hegel and the young Marx. But who is the proletariat? What does it want? What can it do? Sartre will answer later: the proletariat has no existence nor will it outside the Communist Party. Without the Party, the proletariat is not a class but a mass. The Party is the necessary mediator to transform a group of selfish individuals into a fraternal community, to pass from "the molecular disorder of the state of nature to the civil state."

This period of Sartre's life, marked by his reply to Claude Lefort, with *Communists and Peace* and with *The Ghost of Stalin*, is the one which will cement for many years the tie uniting Sartrian existentialism to a most prophetic and dogmatic Marxism. Merleau-Ponty will himself hasten to abandon an approach which seemed imprudent and of which he had been the initiator and the theoretician. More involved in the struggles, more attentive to the international context, more concerned about not separating "the workers from their party," Sartre, solitary and reckless, will to the contrary get more involved in this path. He had the impression that the more opposed he was the more he was justified; and he will be opposed from all directions. All this will not go without damaging the original, seminal Sartrian approach. In *Being and Nothingness*, as a matter of fact, history could not have meaning and men's conflicts could not ever end. The struggle for death appeared as the insurpassable horizon. Hell will always be others, despite Kant, despite Hegel, despite Marx. Camus had declared, not without vigor, and as if he was Sartrian himself: "If man didn't have an end that he might elect as a rule of value, how would history have a discernible meaning henceforth? And if history has meaning, why wouldn't man make it his end? And if he does make the meaning of history his goal, how will he be the recipient of this constantly terrifying freedom of which you speak?" In fact, even after *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, it was difficult to discover a place in the Sartrian philosophy of freedom for the concept of historical progress. Furthermore, for such a concept, implying so many apocalyptic detours, there was no more tolerance in the political consciousness of Sartre the man. At the end of years of hard and heavy responsibility, Sartre — who had made tremendous efforts to abandon morality for history — will rediscover this simple and strong idea of his youth: it is not the end which justifies the means. Man is his situation, project, action, but he cannot live without a morality which transcends

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his goal. Before getting there, he needed several sizeable and weighty trials.

It was a long march along terrible paths, strewn with commitments and traps, where the defense of the rebels was each time opposed by the treason of the revolutionaries. To preserve intact mass spontaneity, it was necessary to stand aloof with respect to the Party and the organized working class. In Cuba the masses had made the revolution against the Party. In Algeria, peasant spontaneity was doing marvels, as the Chinese had formerly done. From May 68 to 1973, the leftist fate of Sartre will be identified with that of the proletarian Left, whose dissolution he will help to precipitate. During all this time, less inclined toward systemic coherence, Sartre will oscillate on the one hand between a conception of man which prohibits history the possibility of a meaning such as the hope of a "reconciliation" between individual and hostile consciousnesses; and, on the other hand, a communitarian conception implying a wager on progressive violence and on the "universalistic power of revolutionary communism."

We must realize that these theses, today abandoned, discredited, denied, have been the texture of reflection of at least two generations, and that they still constitute, without reference to Sartre, the conceptual infrastructure of actions in the revolutionary Third world. When, deceived by the immobility and dogmatism of the French Communist Party, incited to radicalism by colonial wars at the time when France was not "a nation but a neurosis," when Sartre started believing that the class struggle had shifted toward poor countires, and that struggle would expand subsequently to a planetary level, Sartre only anticipated the present situation which makes the white West, Christian and capitalist, the master, and makes the Third world the slave, according to the revitalized dialectic of Hegelian Marxism.

That is why it is essential in our eyes to underscore that at the end of his life Sartre had not only turned his back on the excesses which had brought him to sanctify the ties between the Party and the proletariat, but also those between the proletariat and history. He had admitted that slaves can also become new masters and by doing so might give an aspect of perpetual movement to the dialectic of master and slave. He had stated that so-called proletarian violence could also be inscribed in the "infernal circle of hostile subjectivities." Never, however, did Sartre cease being available for urgent and immediate struggles. Never did he fall into resignation or into aestheticism. His revisions were made in the streets, in struggles, up until his last days. He left us with two ideas: to go to the end limit of our notions whatever the cost, and not to hesitate to think alone. Sartrian heroism is also the courage of solitary belief.

I hold that there is a profound faithfulness toward the first Sartrian approach and this revision which is not a denial, in this kind of conversion to the Sartrism of the early days, and in this reaffirmation of a certain pessimism — how would I say? — liberating, inventive of freedoms (which is a Sartrian expression). Deprived of what Camus called diversions, that is to say, of all that prevents us from facing absurdity and death, Sartre said: "With this third world war which may burst out some day, this miserable whole which is our planet, despair tempts me again: the thought that we will never come to an end, that there is no goal, that there are only small, particular revolutions, but there is no human end, there is nothing of interest to man, there is only disorder. We could think something like that, especially when you are old and you can think: well, anyway, I will die in five years at the most — in fact I think ten years, but it could well be five. In any case, the world seems ugly, bad, and hopeless. That is the calm despair of an old man who will die in it. But precisely, I resist and I know that I shall die in hope, but it is necessary to lay the foundations of this hope."

Suddenly, then, the mishaps of the political march of this so incomparably present

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man bear witness to the many experiences which he risked for us; we feel the need to say with an uneasy gratitude, what he himself declared at the time of the death of another master thinker, André Gide: "We already miss his vigilance...."

THE DRAMA OF POLITICAL CONFRONTATION

by David Rousset*

Sartre came to politics late in life. Fascism in power, the ascent of Nazism, the Spanish Civil War, the Popular Front did not modify at all his central concerns, nor lead him to undertake any kind of action. In Germany, he witnessed Hitler taking power but it was Husserl whom he discovered. It did not occur to him to participate in some way in the Spanish Civil War. When suggestions about action were made to him, he would withdraw considering that all that was more complicated than it appeared. He showed sympathy for the Popular Front, more precisely for the Communist Party, but he did not see why he should either demonstrate or be involved in any way. In truth, he only manifested a detached curiosity for these events which were shaking the world. He was not deeply concerned.

The war and the occupation were the turning point. Politics became the object of his thought and he looked for a suitable form of action. The effort remained, however, limited to a very narrow intellectual sphere. In 1947 the *Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire* constituted his first but also his only active participation in a political party. He did not take the initiative in forming the RDR as has occasionally been written. Originally there were three groups: former Trotskyites of the *Revue Internationale*, leftist Catholic intellectuals and the editorial staff of *Franc-Tireur*, at this time still a mass newspaper. Georges Altman and myself were designated to invite Sartre to join. With the RDR it was a matter of finding an alternative to social democracy and Stalinism. In international affairs, it was necessary to disengage France and Europe from the Soviet-American conflict. Considered from today's perspective, the undertaking certainly was very premature.

Many anecdotes from the period about Sartre's behavior would be illuminating. Although the majority of us had a long militant experience, Sartre was a novice and ill-at-ease — even when it was a matter of an intellectuals' endeavor. The meeting organized by the RDR at the Salle Pleyel marks a significant date. For the last time, one saw together on the same platform. Sartre, Camus, André Breton, Simone de Beauvoir, Richard Wright, Plievier, Silone, Carlo Lévi, Jeff Last, and Rousset. I was the organizer and in trouble with Camus, who thought the Sartrian contingent was too numerous. Finally I had to ask Merleau-Ponty to give up the floor. *Entretiens sur la Politique* between Sartre, Gérard Rosenthal and myself clarified our convergences and also Sartre's criticisms of the Communist Party. Divergences appeared mainly over the issue of our ties with American labor unions. But in truth, neither the way of presenting the problems nor the way of resolving them was suitable to Sartre. After the RDR, Sartre became a fellow traveler of the Communist Party for many years.

My break with Sartre dates from 1950 and concerns the concentration camps in the Soviet Union. In 1949 I had asked the former inmates of the Nazi camps to form a

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commission of inquiry into the system of concentration camps. That was done, and the truth was then established concerning the corrective labor camps. Everyone knows about the stormy debate that followed. In an editorial in *Les Temps Modernes* entitled "The Days of Our Life" (co-signed by Merleau-Ponty), Sartre, with extreme polemical violence, broke with me. His argument is most interesting. He doesn't deny the nature of the system of camps. He admits, apparently without qualification, what we had just proven, which sets him apart from the communists of the time. On the other hand, he maintains that this system of concentration camps has no political or social significance. This aberrant conclusion is revealing, not only of Sartre's positions, but of the nature of his thought, his methods of approaching reality. In fact, this strange doctrine hindered political awareness for many communist militants. One has only to read Pierre Daix to realize this. Subsequently, in the confusion and anguish of his drama with the C.P., a protesting Sartre gradually appeared. Rejecting society and its values, he also rejected any compromise with that society. This perpetual and naked protest became the dominant act of his last years. He invented a new dialectic, he who had concentrated so much effort to construct an ideology. He now leaves us incomplete and contradictory exercises. Sartre's drama is the drama of his confrontation with politics, where politics turns out to be stronger than he. Sartre frees himself through protest, through raw protest: and this is perhaps the essence of what will be his greatness.

A CONTAGIOUS ENTHUSIASM AND YOUTHFULNESS

by Alain Geismar*

The sixties witnessed two Sorbonnes. A Sorbonne of academics who thought they had discovered a recipe for rejuvenation with the "scandal" of structuralism — in reality a topic with pre-set perimeters — and whose participants became embroiled in the old literary quarrel of the ancients and the moderns. And the Sorbonne of the students, of the Algerian war, the place where new methods of action appeared; the Sorbonne of political factions constantly in a state of crisis with inadequate solutions, and incapable of expressing practical experience, of understanding the issues.

That Sartre was absent from the first Sorbonne (which got its face smashed in May) is evidence of his presence in the youth movement. Sartre was there in May 1968, at the Sorbonne. He was welcomed as a long-awaited comrade. Not for a lecture: he came to talk with those who had rediscovered speech. He was a hit. He was of the *Movement*: that was obvious. But physical contact — direct, fusional — was necessary. He carried it out.

Sartre knew from the very beginning that a basic phenomenon was taking place. He did not understand it, nor did *The Critique of Dialectical Reason* contain or predict it. If I was not afraid of sounding simplistic, I would say that one dimension of the movement unfolds where the *Critique* stops — with the first volume.

During the May events, all could discern, if they really wanted to, the group in fusion and direct democracy. But it wasn't until 1972 and the "Foreward" to *Les Maos en France* that the issue of "morality in actions" would clearly emerge, expressed by Sartre from the practical experience of the *Gauche Prolétarienne*.

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Direct democracy and the group in fusion are the main themes of the conversation between Sartre and Daniel Cohn-Bendit in *Le Nouvel Observateur* (May 20, 1968). Sartre was already attempting to name what e could sense: the problem of self-determination (*souveraineté*).

May 1970. Workers from dozens of factories rediscover the practice of occupations. *La Cause du Peuple* had the headline: "We have the right to lock up the bosses." A later interview with Sartre in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, entitled: "The toughs have the floor," centered on the political and moral meaning of the workers' experience.

Why specify these things, instead of presenting a simple chronology of Jean-Paul Sartre's involvement in the militant actions of the period? Because one must see beyond the series of specific acts, as important as they have been. These actions were never divorced from a searching, from a fundamental labor of thought. Sartre and the militants were in search of a May that would open up the way.

If one does not do more than place Sartre at the Sorbonne — occupying the CNPF with the militants of *Vive la Révolution*, perched on the barrel at Billancourt, director of *La Cause du Peuple*, testifying in court, in his putting the northern coal mines on trial by refusing to accept the inevitability of accidents — one runs the risk of seeing only the visible tip of the iceberg.

During these months and years Sartre worked. The events of May found him in the middle of writing *L'Idiot de la Famille*. But they did not make him abandon Flaubert — he knew that there was no contradiction in that. Sartre was firmly convinced that his pursuits were linked with those of the movement.

At this time he spoke frequently of the emergence of a *new intellectual*, as opposed to the emergence of the former type who can only be involved as a fellow traveler, having access to the masses only through the party apparatus. In his involvement with the Proletarian Left, Sartre discovered direct contact. He encountered the militants who had become workers and the activist workers at Renault. He visited the mining villages of Pas-de-Calais. His literary work is not removed from the field of battle, a no-man's land protected from reactionary tendencies by simply belonging to the author. No, for him, it is the same task.

Most of the intellectuals at that time thought the intervention of Sartre was like a terrific resonance chamber of our experience. Sartre was the first and the most prestigious of the intellectuals who joined us. We often would have really liked him to abandon the *Flaubert* in order to undertake a popular novel; we would have liked him even more at our disposal.

The encounter and love affair between Sartre and the *Gauche Prôletarienne* in actions where morality was freed from superstructural heights so that it might enter into experience itself, led to a common endeavor that, in the urgency of the struggle, was at times only merely outlined. The "Foreword" to *Les Maos en France* is its first theoretical version. One finds it often in later conversations with Simone de Beauvoir and the staff of *Les Temps Modernes* in the film by Astruc.

If the shortcomings and the subjectivism of *La Cause du Peuple* irritated him, if he harshly criticized our worst mistakes, it is because he expected a lot from this common enterprise.

If he had simply wanted to "shelter" with his notoriety the generous but awkward experience of some young fellows, a few words from him, a few signatures, and one or two appearances at meetings would have sufficed. But there were entirely different stakes involved. This is not to say that everything we undertook turned out to be a common endeavor. Sartre considered the *Gauche Prolétarienne* as more ideal than it actually was, although he had himself numerous contacts with the real group, in

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multiple encounters and in multiple local actions.

This is not a history of the *Gauche Proletarienne*. I'm trying to reconstruct what Sartre contributed to our relation, what he created with us, the militants. His theoretical elaboration was more precious than many of us sensed it then.

This close relation with Sartre was never tarnished by any complacency. If he perceived the impending disappearance of the intellectual (as the "theoretician of practical knowledge") he did not expect it to come solely from the proletarianization of intellectuals. Sartre knew that man, because of the division of labor, was not yet constructed. The fact that some students became "établi" workers indicates a problem but does not solve it.

The common enterprise resulted in a search destined to confer duration to the moment of "masses in fusion," in order to avoid the "practico-inert" stage. We feverishly looked for it in the sum of actions and in the meaning given to those actions. We didn't find it; and it is this acknowledgement that made us dissolve in 1973. We did not succeed in conquering politics. Sartre's thought helped us to understand the necessity of this dissolution, even if he himself was not in favor of it.

After 1973 and the dissolution of the *Gauche Prolétarienne*, Sartre's work continued despite illness and blindness. This is the time of the well-known episode of the attempt to televise a "History of the Century," — an attempt ruined by scared and timorous politicians. And thus continued Sartre's quest: an immense work site was opened to try to resolve the problems that May had posed but not answered — a great rereading of the stages of his thought, of history, of the French Revolution, of the Terror....

What emerges of Sartre in his last years is important and is the object, I believe, of a major misunderstanding. Essentially, it deals with dissidence and human rights. The facts are well-known: the reception, organized on his initiative, of Soviet dissidents by French intellectuals the day when Leonid Brezhnev was received at the Elysée; participation in the Boat for Vietnam and the visit to Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, accompanied by Ramond Aron; and the demonstration before the Soviet Embassy to protest against the murder of Armenians.

Do we have to decipher these actions of Jean-Paul Sartre as a return to the philosophical principles of the 18th century, to the philosophy of human rights, to the practice he challenged in 1972, of the classical intellectual considered an accuser confronting the powers that be? I don't think so. Sartre never took part in the "New Philosophers" scene. It annoyed him profoundly and he confirmed it strongly in his last interview. Even during the immediate post-war years, Sartre proclaimed that he wasn't the man in despair that some thought. In a radio interview he stated that if he was so deep in despair he would neither write or go out in the street.

So, do we find here a break — it would be the first one — between thought and action? Can one accept that the Sartre of the conversations with Benny Lévy may not be the "real Sartre"? — in order to preserve from this period only those acts in favor of the dissidents? In the same vein the actions undertaken with leftists would equally account for nothing in the elaboration of his thought. This interpretation is to be repudiated and one must get accustomed to the idea that Sartre will still provide surprises for a long time.

No, between 1978 and 1980 Sartre did not become an intellectual of the old order nor, as he said in 1972, a fellow traveler of the party of human rights. In "human rights" we have "human" and this, for Sartre, refers to the man who still does not exist, the man still to be created, who is the only stake in the great battle. And then we have "rights," the human rights which should be used to refabricate *les ayants-droit*, the propertied classes, those bastards that he's always detested.

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It is precisely because he felt that 1968 and what came after as well as the work he carried out every day made possible the foundation for another philosophy of human rights, that he became involved one more time and transcended the simple denunciation of the Gulag. He engaged, in my understanding, because, in the same gesture and breath, he had the idea of recovering hope and rebuilding the left — a left which is to be inverted as the man it encompasses, no longer based on "nature" but on "liberty."

Finally, Sartre would have no doubt participated in denunciating communists' crimes and atrocities, signed a few petitions and made public appearances; but, without grounding in hope, in the future, he would have not been involved with the dissidents to the point of organizing the meeting at the Récamier theater. The intellectual who is purely a denouncer, an accuser, a fellow traveler, was no longer enough for Sartre. He was always a creator and he was always looking for a new way. The transition from individual to humanity cannot be disengaged from the mire of present society but can be sought always within "practical ensembles" in a hope which is synonymous with the left. This is what I heard, a month ago, in the Lévy interview, as a result of an immersion in fifty years of work and action, of fifty years of searching: a contagious enthusiasm and youthfulness.

IN MEMORY OF A REBEL

by Alain Krivine and Daniel Bensaïd*

With Sartre we've shared encounters, campaigns and causes: Algeria, Vietnam, the Burgos trials.... At times we've even been in complicity. but we had neither the same politics nor the same history. For the past fifty years, our persistent efforts have been those of the leftist opposition to Stalinism and social democracy. It is probably the only one, in the workers' movement, in which Sartre never participated.

He remained to the end the living contradiction of a time when intellectuals were obliged to choose their function and their side in the class struggle. To choose and to become involved at the very moment when Stalinism was prevailing made them suspect by definition, potential traitors, completely enclosed in the boundary of their bad consciousness, billeted in roles of passive figureheads or official ideologues at the mercy of a brutal dismissal. Instead of pulling them away from their ornamental and academic functions, Stalinism confined them to the roles of academic fellow travelers, quite removed from any fully responsible real militantism.

At the height of the Cold War, Sartre had the courage to take a stand in the face of the collapse and demobilization of a disenchanted intelligentsia. But, in so doing, he shamelessly apologized for Stalinism at its very worst, which he still justified several years later in *The Ghost of Stalin:* "Must we accept as socialism this bleeding monster that tears at its own flesh? Frankly, yes, this was socialism in its primitive stage, there was no other, except perhaps in Plato's heaven. We had to support that or support nothing.

Thus, he was tossed around by his pseudo-realistic fascination for this communist party wrongly identified with the working class, until the final repudiation in the post-1968 years.

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Unlike numerous intellectuals of his generation, he brought to many their first awareness of politics and he introduced them to political action. He was able to predict the impact of the Algerian shock-wave and the renewal of interest in the militant intellectual, represented by Nizan. He himself repeated, during the events in Hungary, the same act of rupture accomplished by his classmate at the time of the Hitler-Stalin pact. By doing so, he thought that he had reconciled himself with Nizan and that he had at last overcome their estrangement. However, he still had not found those social and historical roots which are necessary for collective struggle and not for individual commitment. Thus, we have this mixture of subversive availability and of erratic radicalism which characterizes his work.

As a philosopher, Sartre led the fight of "dialectical reason" against the positivist machinery of bureaucratic reason in the service of the Soviet state, the fight of free subjectivity against vulgar determinism. For all that, he did not manage to escape metaphysics, balanced between the Absolute and Nothingness.

When he thought he had finally reached, within Maoist groups, the status of the welcome and recognized intellectual in the ranks of the workers, without questioning the sincerity of anyone involved, this was to repeat the traditional role of the intellectual giving his moral caution in a flashy display. Sartre's stature was elevated by the void left by intellectuals devoured or sterilized by Stalinism. With a little historical distance and a little less French provincialism, it will appear that the foundation of his work was flawed from the beginning.

His main weakness is in his deliberate ignorance of what was for half a century the living Marxism. The bad faith polemic against Trotskyism which runs through his work, from *The Communists and Peace* to more recent interviews, indicate the suppression of a political alternative which he had always refuted: that of a struggle begun long ago by the first victims of the Moscow purge trials, by the first clients of the Gulag. It is, on the other hand, disheartening that Sartre would turn up, at the time of the campaign for the boat people, at the Elysée with Raymond Aron, this time not to put imperialist destructions on trial, not to denounce the economic blockade of Vietnam or the European blackmail in food aid, but to defend human rights in Carter's style. Because he remained to the end a philosopher, an *enfant terrible*, a plebeian Voltaire, Sartre can receive today the most diverse eulogies and can assemble around his myth a posthumous unanimity. Because we recognize the genuine importance of his contribution, but also its limits, we feel freer to acclaim in him the part which we will remember: Sartre the rebel, the anti-colonialist, the ally against all repression.

GOD, HOW THEY HATED HIM

by Jean-François Kahn*

We know that this time there wasn't much hope, that we had to act as if, but no, in vain the journalists are necrophiliacs, it is well known.... We couldn't...let's be frank, it isn't modesty or decency which held us back or who knows what leap of

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sensitivity.... Simply the almost oppressive sensation that Sartre was all we had left — and that we needed him to stay a little longer.

It is good form, when someone is dying, whose glory renders useless the frail banderellas that they wanted to give him during his life, to brag about the love he radiated and aroused.... Oh come on...the grandeur, the force, the importance of that man were of the dimension of terrifying formidable hate which he encountered every time he took a step forward.

They detested, scorned and slandered him. And rightly so. That was the best homage they could have paid him, really; that is the medal for him who never had a decoration, was in no academy, and refused the Nobel Prize with disdain. And someone would like to take that away from him! And make of him, dead, (from no one knows what consensus) this ethereal prophet which he always refused to be during his life, and to the end!

Listen to them, these dogs who never stopped howling at his heels, fangs showing, grin in the breeze! ... What is wrong with them? Have they forgotten the bag carrier? The disarmed defender of all dissidences! The determined adversary of their so-called "moral" order, which he would have called "immoral"?

So why pretend? Why play tricks? And to think that thus under pretext of burying a body, they will bury a message?

You hated him, he gave it back to you, he wasn't "nice"...he wasn't André Maurois or Paul Guth...he never learned by conformism or hypocrisy...on a tomb which would recover nothing he had liked and defended. You, guardians of privileges, auxiliaries of injustice, profiteers of all collective fears, paid assassins of all hopes, you had nothing to expect from him. He bothered you. You detested him. Dry your tears then. No one is asking so much from you.

Because if, really, a sort of anguish has a hold on us since the news came out, it is because in general his enemies were also ours...including the irresistable functionaries of the ready-made revolution, service included. That doesn't mean, of course, that all of us here have always agreed with Sartre. And, anyway, besides this murderous hostility of which certain trashy newspapers made themselves the vehicle — how many understood smiles, whispered reserves..."then, he was doing his own, he would never change, certainly he wasn't gifted for politics!"

But maybe he didn't give a damn about politics. ...He was sometimes wrong? But haven't Malraux, Gide, Valery been reproached for having sometimes made mistakes? The truth is that none of the aforementioned, no matter how great a writer, was a "conscience." Did anyone ever ask himself at a difficult crossroad of our civil and national existence: "When is Gide going to speak? When is Valery going to express his opinion?" Sartre has always been required to say exactly what was necessary at the precise moment it was necessary...An error of Malraux added more to his aura of literary adventurer and Mauriac could fall in love with De Gaulle without anyone protesting...But one *faux pas* of Sartre and his credibility was doubted...Such intransigence was, in fact, a measure of the extraordinary moral authority which this guiding light of a man exercised, at once an oracle and a party...who doesn't feel that in a France less liberal, he would have been Solzhenitsyn? So, sometimes he made mistakes...But with the simple distance made possible by the suddenly open nothingness of death, one can ask the question without fear: Did Sartre ever really find himself on the wrong side? Add it up: the Occupation, the Vietnam war, the Algerian war, the torture at Suez, the Soviet tanks in Budapest, the coup of Prague, the boat people in Vietnam, the invasion of Afghanistan, the defense of Goldman, the battle for a different press and the ultimate protest against the segregation of which homo-

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sexuals are victims... Let's repeat it: when did Jean-Paul Sartre make a mistake about which camp to be in, or which cause to support, accepting the risk — in order to be faithful to himself — of giving the impression of changing?

And his work, you will say to me? But that is exactly what we are talking about. It is the same indeed with Sartre as with Voltaire or Hugo.... They are their work and they are in their work. All three, obsessed as they were, in their own way, by the unique problem of freedom, didn't they fight this combat with all the techniques offered to them by the science of expression? Theater, novel, story, essay, newspaper article, all of philosophy, discourse.... And didn't they, furthermore, as an appendix to this written work, add the work of their acts, desiring as they did to show that a thought is nothing if it doesn't prove its own veracity. Writing about freedom? What sense would it make, really, if it didn't go along with an unceasing struggle for freedom, one's own freedom as well as that of others?....

Ivory towers... Maybe Jean-Paul Sartre has dynamited them once and for all....

It was thus normal that those who hid their cowardice or their resignation hated him to such an extent.

THE SYMBOL OF A WANDERING

by Edgar Morin*

Sartre is the spokesman, symbol, and hero of the wandering leftist intelligentsia in search of political truth from 1945 to the present. This search to extract oneself from the privileged class and defend oppressed humanity, to pull oneself from egocentric solitude and find community, to tear oneself from abstract idea and find the historical incarnation, to escape from rhetorical proclamation and find an effective commitment, led him to confront, during a very long journey, all the problems and dramas of revolutionary thought.

In fact, he fell into the temptation of "the intellectual party" with the RDR (*Rassemblement Démocratique Revolutionnaire*) founded with Albert Camus and David Rousset where the words democracy and revolution were harmoniously united. The failure of the RDR led Sartre to the idea that revolution must precede democracy, which will become its ultimate flower. In this approach, Sartre disassociated himself not only from Camus, but also from Trotskyism and from Claude Lefort, whose Marxist critique of Stalinism was the most coherent and radical, that of the *Socialism ou Barbarite* group.

In his desire for realism, he was taken in by Stalinist reality, up to the repression of Hungarian workers' councils by the so-called Soviet army. Ever since then, differing from Althusser's rigid thought which is completely insensitive to the shocks and electric-shocks which upset the planet from 1957-1978, the search for the real revolution is influenced by all the stirrings, echoes all the distrubances and revolts which spring forth in the world.

Differing from the ark of biblical alliance, which escapes the nomadisms of the desert to settle in Jerusalem, the ark of Sartrian revolution tears itself away from

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Moscovite Jerusalem to wander finally in the desert. first, it seeks a spot in the Third World and the Algerian FNL will appear at one moment as the precursor of the new world revolution, the detonator of the new French revolution. Then the ark will come back to Paris, attracted by the hoyous explosion of May 1968. It will hesitate according to the vicissitudes of the different varieties of leftism, to spend a time in Peking, before leaving in the latter years, once more wandering, a disabused but not dispairing ark.

Each fraction of the leftist intelligentsia has, at least at one time, experienced these problems in a Sartrian fashion. The whole of this intelligentsia can find in Sartre, correctly, the face of its search and wandering. But the death of this great man should not be the occasion for it to congratulate itself or venerate itself while exalting the demystifying and elucidating qualities of the deceased. Instead it should reflect upon this tragedy of the intellectual who, in the very quest for truth, has met the greatest illusions and who in the search for revolution, could arrive for a time at new forms of oppression.

Here it is a question of something entirely different than judging (condemning, congratulating, absolving). Death can put us past obsequiousness and resentment. It can stimulate us to understand: to understand that so many errors and wanderings, which struck good wills and the best wills (only the indifferent and cynical were constantly able to stay politically "lucid") came with considerable weight from the blind forces unwinding upon our century, from the revolution's rapid transformation into its opposite — while their ideology, our ideology — stated the same. So many errors and wanderings come from the fact that the new oppressions and repressions were masked not only by incredible settings but speak the very language of our aspirations and truths.

Sartre's last message, the interview with Benny Lévy, is still a symbol, an expression of the state of the leftist intelligentsia in these last years of very low mythological waters. One can see there decomposition, fatigue, disabusement, but also nonresignation and the stimulus to rethink everything. Not to start over at zero, because once rethought and meditated, the weight of our mistakes becomes experience. I interpret thus this message: the long trip which brings us back to our port of departure incites us to take off again but in another way — the same but different.

OUR JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

by Louis Althusser*

I am distressed. Sartre must have suffered a great deal from the irretrievable loss of his eyes. He was a generous and courageous man. He always defended the cause of the unfortunate, of the exploited, and of the oppressed. He always struggled for freedom, most often with the communists and, if necessary, against them. He believed in the strength of reason and in the contagious power of the idea of freedom. But above all, for me and I have said it several times, he was our Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He reminded me irresistably of the statement of Marx about Rousseau; which I quote from memory: "This man, who, no matter what his follies, was of a profound intransigence, and who never accepted the least compromise with established power." There is no greater compliment for an intellectual, in my opinion. I hope that, in this respect, more important than all our differences of opinion, Sartre has an infinite number of disciples.

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THIS WAS AN INTELLECTUAL

by Regis Debray*

There are great men, great words bury them, then everyone goes home. That makes for one more ceremony: speeches, tombstones, statues. And then there are the others, those of whom it will be necessary to speak about from now on with a lowered voice, like one talks to oneself, with great intimacy. That kind of greatness is impregnable. I believe that it is even irreversible, like a secret — definitely superior. Sartre's funeral will be interminable because it will not be a ceremony. The procession in this case will be a tête-à-tête with several hundreds of thousands of people on one side and with him on the other. There will not be a Jean-Paul Sartre avenue. One is liberated more easily from the novel and the myth than from the whisperings of a collective memory.

Who, in this country and at this time, has been able to establish such an intimate rapport with his century? Not the age of Louis XIV, or the age of rhetoric perpetuated through textbooks, but the real one: the age of daily life and newspapers. it is the age of failures that hurt, of thumbing one's nose at history and all those disasters, great or small, which are the warp of the era: 1940-1980. The philosopher of our rainy days has not cried, nor accused, nor belittled — but only tried to understand and to explain. From Buenos Aires to Beirut, all intellectuals of our period have belonged at one time of their life to the Sartre family. Even his adversaries thought of him as the intimate enemy because it was through him that they made the acquaintance of their era and got into the swing of things.

I put myself in the batch, but there was more than one of us in my *lycée* in the fifties whose heart was made to beat by *Being and Nothingness*. Which of us, in the last thirty or forty years, has not had a coming to terms with Sartre, with the door closed and without him, even from five thousand kilometers away, like when family waters get troubled and your heart is heavy? His nearest friends, I guess, had dozens of them.

I had one once face to face. It was bad like a separation. There are tens of thousands of us who Sartre, some day or another, led to what used to be called a self-examination. If he had been only the "great conscience" of our time, he would not have bothered us so much, and we would have left him perched, once and for all, on a tombstone. He did not give us his ethics but he did something better: in his way, he put us each time, up against the wall.

The age of philosophies of conscience and of the Protestant ethic has passed. All of our friends have gone through Sartre because he was unavoidable. Most continued on their way. Those who have something to do with today's theology and with human sciences will have a lot to say on the subject because the delay is considerable. But what difference does it makel Ideology is a perishable substance and knowledge also wilts. Writing resists. When the author of *Le Critique de la Raison Dialectique* has disappeared, the *Flaubert* of critical analysis will remain. And far in front of us, the author of *Words*, a masterpiece in its purest form, rock crystal refracting all inclemencies, one of the most weighty monuments to our language.

A book, some articles, a presence — is that all? It is up to each person to make his reckoning, which will be done all alone behind our back. But in the accounting of

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knowledge and of literature, the essential will be lacking: a way of life. Polemics without baseness, tenacity without resentment, change without repudiation, dignity without formality, intelligence without craftiness, and everything without calculations. Incredible when one thinks about it. That is what an intellectual is. Sartre did his job well, an old and beautiful profession, that industry would like to render obsolete.

He was tied, more than one knows, to the French idea that artisans of words were not the least admirable of the French nobles. "French," you used to reply in Caracas or in Damas. "Ah! yes. . . De Gaulle and Sartre, how are they?" A curious accolade for the statesman and the man of letters who did not like each other, and for a good reason: that enmity itself is one of the honors of this nation.

The France of yesterday, already? Let's at least keep a vision of it in the corner of the eye. It is not pious but violent — like a regret or a demand, or both at once.

A LANGUAGE FAMILIAR TO US

by Emmanuel Levinas*

That human freedom can be rediscovered after the experience of all that has been forced upon man, came from Sartre as a message of hope for a generation grown up beneath the fatalities of our century, and no longer convinced by the humanism of eloquence — even if it took the form of a glorification of human rights. This new philosophy was above all the power of speech returned to those who had lost it amidst the rhetoric into which great projects vanish. The Jewish sensibility was particularly moved by the fact that this freedom never turned into the evocation of some outdated and pagan myths linked to the ideal of personal salvation. At the same time, for Sartre it involved a concern for others. It was a source of responsibilities to assume with regard to that which, to all appearances, "is none of our business." Anxiety over a freedom that was willed for others, and not, as for Heidegger (philosopher of the pre-genocide period), an anxiety over *my* death — anxiety for that which is *most mine*, arising out of the concern of the human being that I am for my very being. To many of us, to the survivors of the death camps, the escapees from universal history, this new language suddenly turned out to be close and familiar. It played a major role in our bravery to return to older forms of thought — progressively forgotten for a long time — that focus on Scripture and religious treatises. Instead of finding in these texts pure ceremonial concepts, it meant to see there once again the call to a mission to men, to obey the call in a variety of forms, in the West of in Israel, to engage ourselves along difficult paths.

Sartre's fundamental philosophical lesson is a truth related to the Jewish conception of man, of human action that is always possible, unextinguishable by sin here on earth, of his hopes here below, of an undissolvable link between all goals transcending history and the goal of justice accorded to the other. But Sartre spoke as though there were not a God who could render this justice for us. It seemed like Judaism's irreducible and incontrovertible demand of the relation to God, or that which would more exactly be called the seizing by God, that unbelievers' paradoxical piety would not be

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able to deny, of Jews moved to belong to Judaism, to prolong a history unlike others.

It was a fundamental lesson of freedom, exalted by an unlimited work that shook much of the dust from bourgeois morality — perhaps in order to extract the essential. It was a lesson that, beyond the physical presence of Sartre on the paths of freedom in the streets of Paris, was often felt in his signature, beyond the silhouette of this new kind of man, engaged and always available, as if unhindered by anything that would slow him down. Like us, alas, in spite of our attachments and our travelers fatigue, he was always in motion. This image renders difficult to imagine an aging Sartre, and now makes it difficult to grasp his death. Independently of all that he might have thought and said, Sartre, for us, was primarily that.

In an immense body of work our part is certainly modest. In appearance, at least, he saw Judaism in its modern, historical avatars: victim of anti-semitism, founder of the state of Israel. The present relevance of Judaism could not escape the glance from an already constituted philosophical anthropology. This relevance has held Sartre's interest through the suffering by which it manifests itself.

Anti-Semite and Jew, published soon after the Liberation, reduced anti-semitism to the resentment of the mediocre and the limited, who in their ill temper find revenge for their lowly destiny in calumny and persecution and, in so doing, offer themselves a facile and artificial superiority. Even today it is difficult to overestimate the importance of this analysis and demystification of a crime decorating itself with doctrines bestowing it with scientific foundations, and appearing as a cultural phenomenon. But in this book Sartre goes to the extreme point of attributing to anti-semitism the perpetuation of the Jew in his difference. It is beneath and through the look of the anti-semite that the Jew receives his essence. Sartre does not yet ask in *Anti-Semite and Jew* if this continuity of Jewish identity has an independent and eternal ground, if it does not express a protest against a certain order of things, and hence if it does not attest to an inflexible interiority, like the famous "stiff neck." Despite the fact of a certain resilient, constantly menaced Jewish society established since Hitler, Sartre does not yet ask himself if resistance with a firm, but naked back, in blood and tears, is not the most human possibility of the human condition itself — a condition that is a non-condition and rooted in the demands, unconditional in their truth, of the one against the many.

In spite of the understanding he displayed of Palestinian nationalism, and of its just complaints, and despite the fact that he recalled this cause at the very moment when he was receiving in Paris an honorary degree conferred by the University of Jerusalem, Sartre was, and always remained, faithfully supportive of the existence of the state of Israel.

The man who refused the Nobel Prize — undoubtedly in order to preserve a sovereign freedom of speech — thought that an honorary distinction coming from Jerusalem did not constitute a threat to his independence. He hoped for negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, and he encouraged meetings between intellectuals representing both sides — at least those who cared to reply to his appeals. In spite of the anti-semitic violence of the left surrounding him, the sympathy he expressed for Jewish aspirations probably already revealed a position different from the one developed in *Anti-Semite and Jew.* Never in his writings or his spoken words did there appear a doubt over the legitimacy of the Jewish state. Never, of course, did one encounter there anything that resembled the arguments of those lofty spiritualists who, out of a fear for the integrity of its supernatural vocation which can only be realized in the diaspora, refuse to accord to Israel the status of Holy Land. This is an argument which undoubtedly neglects the fact that the holiness of the land signifies,

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for those who had not forgotten it over the centuries, an unparalleled political project external to Hegelian concepts — an ambitious project, difficult, contested, and beseiged, that is only now beginning.

On this point the interviews that Sartre gave several weeks before his death are extremely significant. They bring to us an echo of his last thoughts. We have no reason to doubt the exactness of the text. They contain a final witness of sympathy for Judaity, and of the distance traveled since *Anti-Semite and Jew* appeared a third of a century ago. There we find something else as well: the reconsideration by a great philosopher of his attitude towards Hegel. A philosopher settling his views on Hegel is like a weaver installing a loom — a necessary preliminary task to all subsequent work.

New speculative positions are developed there. Formerly for Sartre, following Hegel, history meant the history of states, nations and governments. it is within such a history that people find their meaning. Thus, formerly, the history of Jews seemed to Sartre an artificial and irrational ideal. But a subsequent reading of Salo Baron's massive *Social and Religious History of the Jews* has taught him about the historical consistency of the dispersions, and about the Jews who were united in spite of what separated them — united around the Book in the monotheist fidelity which gave rise to an ethics of men living for each other. If there is a Jewish history, Hegel is wrong. but the fact is that there is a Jewish history. Thus, in humanity, there is a dimension of meaning other than that provided by universal history. There is another history. This thought is not the result of a meditation on Moses and the prophets, but it is rather the consequence of reading an American historian.

It is not a metaphysics that imposes such a conclusion, but rather sociology, and all the world does not have to call this other history "sacred history" under one name or another. Is it not however, an essential dimension of the sensible? Is it not reasonable from now on for a statesman, when questioning himself on the nature of the decisions that he is making, to ask not only whether the decisions are in agreement with the sense of universal history, but also if they are in agreement with the other history?

The history of the Jewish people, in which the hope for a Jewish state in the land of Israel has always been essential, has caused Sartre to doubt the sovereign and majectic architecture of Hegelian logic. Does not this signify at the same time that the state in question does not open on to a history that is purely political, the history that is written by the proud and the conquering, and that such a project, far from finding its meaning in a nationalistic particularism, is one of the possibilities of the difficult humanity of the human?

A JUST MAN

by Shmuel Trigano*

My generation lived somewhat in the shadow of *Anti-Semite and Jew*. That the Jew is the inauthentic being *par excellence*, essentially defined by the glance of the other, independently without substance, and without project, seemed to us a kind of injustice, as well as a challenge launched at our being, even if it was accompanied by a warm generosity. And, of course, there were those among us who assimilated this book to a tradition within Western philosophy for which the Jew is the antithesis of freedom

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and of the advent. Others, on the other hand, made use of this definition that assured them of a moral and philosophical silence that they found gratifying. The impact of this book was so wide-spread that the expression "the Jew according to the definition of Sartre" became, in the Jewish vocabulary, a cliché understood by all.

Then, little by little, I came to understand the extent to which the Sartrian judgement had been animated by a profound empathy for Judaism. Sartre was actually writing about the Jews that he knew, of the assimilated Jew, the Jew of 1789 France, the Jew that the Jews themselves wanted to be, blind to themselves to the point that anti-semitism constituted the entirety of their being. It was his effort to make sense of the Jewish question, to demonstrate the mechanics of anti-semitism in order to free the Jew and others from it. I understood, in fact, that this rationalization had for him the widest implications: it provided the best possible access to the universalizing rationalism through which the assimilated Jew attempted to transcend his isolation. If the tone of *Anti-Semite and Jew* seems to grasp so inadequately the Jewish experience and the emptiness hollowed out by Auschwitz within contemporary consciousness, can we really hold this against Sartre?

I don't think so, because, after all, nothing obliged him to find more in Jewish reality than it seemed to display. On the contrary, his *Anti-Semite and Jew* aided an entire generation to become conscious of the depth of the problem of modern Jewish identity. His last interviews with Benny Lévy witnessed to the seriousness with which he took the project of a sequel to *Anti-Semite and Jew* — a sequel, alas, that was only sketched. In these interviews one cannot clearly see how he would have related it to his earlier texts. Nevertheless, we are provided a glimpse of his discovery of the full authenticity of Jewish existence.

The final indication of an empathy that was never denied is his effort to bring to the same table Israelis and Palestinians (most recently attempted less than a year ago), in the defense of Israel at the heart of all the Left anti-Zionisms, in the generous understanding of the internal contradictions of Israel (the Sephardic problem)...it was an empathy free from obedience to any coterie.

For having lived under the sign of truth, Sartre remains essentially and forever one of the men — one of the few in whom the Jewish tradition sees an Israel on the march in humanity, one of "the just men of the nations."

SARTRE LISTENING TO THE SAVAGES

by Daniel Maximin*

For us, ex-colonized of the Empire, neo-colonized or new-socialized of today, Indochinese and Africans, and for us the West-Indians at the tail end of the colonial cluster, the large place which Sartre deserves in our hearts comes less from what he told us than from how he listened to us.

Indeed, from Rousseau to Marx, from the good savage to the underdeveloped, we have always been the victims of a triangular commerce of thought and knowledge. Non-Western societies — the world of the Other — furnish the land and the labor: the

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exotic slave object of the theoretical western gaze. And it is the European owners of knowledge who administer the productions.

All our cultural practices, material and spiritual, have served to feed the will for power, for possession and for knowledge in Europe, in relation to the sole interests of one region, one class or one ethnic group. At worst, they have been perceived and gathered to serve the interests of a civilization; at the best, as a treasure to pillage by researchers tired of Cartesian rigors. Primitive religions, savage thought, societies without a state, exotic cultures, nothing of what has developed outside of Europe has been accepted by the majority of historians, anthropoligists, scientists and thinkers without having been put through the mill of a judgement which took the mask of rationalism in order to better pretend to be universal. And neither the anti-colonial commitment of these intellectuals or their active solidarity in our struggles have ever been able to weaken the pernicious imperialism of their desire for truth, their thirst to think the Other, to think for the Other, to determine his future and past for him.

Hence the importance of Sartre for us: in the commerce of ideas, he was never slave trader of Knowledge.

Whether it was in his multiple stands for the freedom of Africans, of Asians, or Latin Americans, in his contributions to small radical magazines in Dakar, Ibadan or Johannesburg in the 1950s; in the welcome given by *Les Temps Modernes* to dissidents rebelling against bourgeois or communist molds of revolt — a Richard Wright, Black American breaking with class and race, a Frantz Fanon, a West Indian breaking with assimilation, delivering his violence at Blida and Tunisor in his stands in favor of the napalmed state of Vietnam, then for Vietnamese against the state (the political opinion of these "boat people," he said, "is not our business, it is their business alone, and that of the Vietnamese people.") Sartre was always listening generously to the Other. We know well enough today that what makes a dialogue is less what is said in exchanged discourse than the will of each one to listen — which alone can escape the tense ambush between the Same and the Other on the roads to freedom.

With *Black Orpheus* a crucial study for the generation of independence, Sartre put himself in a position to hear the cultural vindication of negritude, understanding the necessity for the oppressed to vindicate first what the oppressor forbids him (here, the right to write in English, there to speak Creole, sometimes the right to resemble whites, sometimes to be independent); sometimes a true dialectical trap which forces the rebel to show himself before the master always as a better Christian, a better Marxist, a better scientist, a better writer, a better executive, or a better revolutionary, not first for his people and for himself, but by secret wish for recognition of his sameness while refining his image in the European mirror. "Here are some black men, standing, who are looking at you," writes Sartre in this text, "and I hope you feel as I do the chill of being seen. Because the white has enjoyed 3,000 years of the privilege of seeing without being seen. The white man, white because he was man, white like daylight, white like the truth, enlightened creation like a torch, uncovering the secret and white essence of human beings. Today, these black men are looking at us and our gaze is reflected to us. Black torches shine upon the world in their turn, enlightening the world. If we want to crack this finiteness which imprisons us, we can no longer count upon the privileges of our race, of our color, or our techniques: we will not be able to join this totality from which these black eyes exile us, except in tearing off our white suits to attempt simply to be men."

Sartre was also a listener with Fanon, in the "Preface" to *The Damned of the Earth*, and with Patrice Lemumba, in the introduction to the political texts. There was much

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criticism of the violence of his language, he was called complacent to the hate of others, or more royalist than the king in his condemnation of the colonialists. But, there again, his vehemence was not that of the man who emphasizes his own credo, nor that of the masochist hiding in paternalism, but that of the man who imposes silence on others in order to allow the excluded to speak. And his peremptory tone about Fanon was his professorial side — not the master thinker who crowns the excellence of a disciple but the teacher careful to reveal to the sleepy and to the unimaginative the nature of a life with love and challenge.

He was again a man tuned in, during the most tragic moments of the Algerian war. One has but to compare the style of the three major interviews given to Jean Daniel between 1958 and 1960 by Malraux, Sartre and Camus to see at work in him that scrupulous respect for others, without resignation or vanity. In the case of Malraux, it is the manipulating "one" or "we" who dominates: "I have my solution. We are doing everything: agricultural reforms, kibbutzes, barriers, the whole show, we are reinvigorating everything that is Arab and Moslem. We are making the Algerians proud to cooperate with France." In the case of Camus, it is the I which dominates with the impersonal "he" of the subject silent, stuck between his mother and justice: "I am willing to fight for justice... I am a member of the French community, we have to fight for the truce... perhaps we will have to be quiet." And with Sartre we see concern for the Algerians. He quotes their word to appreciate it or fear it, he puts himself in their place, without substituting himself for them. "They are forging themselves with the help of the past.... They scorn us... they want the break... and it is on account of our lack of power."

Fundamentally, the universality as fascist desire and the indignity of thinking for others, are perhaps the only true advances of thought in this century, imposed upon Europe by the awakening of its oppressed in the colonies and in the interior, and by the careful vigilance of a few people like Sartre. One of the very first among those who have respect for the other in oneself as the only end which deserves a future and considers dynamic listening as the most revolutionary way to get there: one of the very first also — with Leiris — to have heard this call from the Third World, expressed by Aimé Césaire in his "letter" to Maurice Thorez: "No doctrine is worth anything except rethought by us, rethought for us, converted to us. And this is a true Copernician in all domains is the habit of doing for us, taking care of things for us, thinking for us, in brief the habit of contesting our right to initiative and which is, after all, the right to personality."

The century of Sartre? Why not? On this point, we have 20 years left to deserve this name.

SARTRE'S ERRORS: A DISCUSSION

by Ramond Aron, André Glucksman, Benny Lévy, *et al.**

Aron: "After having been very close during our school years we had a falling out. We got along very well with Simone de Beauvoir; however, with a few exceptions, during the last thirty years we've had fundamentally different political positions. Sartre

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remained profoundly a moralist. He had great difficulty accepting political positions that were unacceptable within his philosophy.... I saw him a number of times during the last thirty years. The first time, I was in favor of Algerian independence. We were thus on the same side, but we met quite by accident. He greeted me, as we used to do during our youth, with 'Bonjour, mon petit camarade!' I responded, not without some emotion, 'What a number of absurdities we have told in the last few years....' Then he said, which for him was the symbol of reconciliation, 'we should have lunch together.' Of course, we didn't. We were both sure that the dialogue would continue, leaving us on opposite sides.'

[Aron is asked by Bernard Purot how he was affected by their separation.]

Aron: "It would be too much to say that being apart for more than thirty years was 'painful' for me... but it was sad that, given his way of thinking, it was inevitable, or nearly so. He was too much a moralist. Perhaps I'm wrong, but de didn't have enough political sense, he wasn't conscious enough of the relativism of politics. He always had the tendency to regard a political opinion that he condemned as a kind of sin, a moral error. I knew that, because of his disposition, his way of thinking, this was almost always inevitable. I promised myself not to get angry, but I believe that that was impossible; and it was normal that we would be separated. I tell myself — especially right now — that perhaps, despite everything, our dialogue somehow always continued — with perhaps a symbolic significance at the end."

Levy: "It's different for me: what's important to me is not so much his provocations against official France. When I was an adolescent, before I even knew Sartre, what clinched it was the fact that he was against the France of the propertied and privileged (*les ayant-droits*)."

Aron: "Bourgeois France...."

Levy: "No, no, broader than that; those who think they have special rights. In words there is the passage that goes somewhat as follows: 'For me the countryside, the soil, rustic scents are the library. They say it's like that for the Jews; they only like books, they don't like landscapes. Well then, I'm more Jewish than they.' For me, it was love at first sight!"

Glucksman: "I'm French by accident, from a family of German-Jewish refugees. Coming to France my father naturalized me by saying, 'This is nevertheless the homeland of Voltaire,' and for me Sartre was above all that, someone who stands up for justice. As a young student I belonged to the Communist Party. That didn't last long, but the first book I bought was *Being and Nothingness* (for various reasons — it was good to have under your arm when picking up girls) and I read it. Over all it taught me how to think about my own experience, to think unhindered, immediately. At the time when Sartre was very close to the Communist Party he made me quit it really quickly."

Pivot: "What accounts for the extraordinary relation between Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir?"

Levy: "Whenever he spoke of it, he talked a lot about her. He said that there was an intellectual complicity between them, something he never encountered anywhere else. Consistently, for every idea, every project, every manuscript, he wanted advice only from her."

Glucksman: "When I told Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre how I reacted when as a young student I first read *The Second Sex* and *The Wall* they were surprised — that I read them as pornographic literature! I believe they do have that quality because they shook up many things in my head. Sartre was not only a great philosopher, a great writer, a politically engaged man; he was a philosopher while being a writer and a

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writer while being a philosopher. Here's the scandal: a philosopher, a full-fledged philosopher, who's object of reflection is vomit. The study of sexual relations is not a subject covered in philosophy departments. Take for example Simone de Beauvoir, who describes what can be found in a woman's sex: clothes pins, etc. This is not usual in respectable France. In the solidarity between Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre there was never any trace of scandal. It was innocent. In the pursuit of truth, it isn't important at all whether one is shocking or not.

[Aron brings up the topic of Sartre's last interview with Benny Lévy.]

Aron: "Excuse me for saying so, but this interview does not reflect Sartre's views (are not in character). You had an admirable relation with him. With you he acknowledged certain things, things that he has never said. Your interview is a document, but Sartre the philosopher that I knew, admired and rejected, does not appear in these last texts. He is more sensible; while Sartre's work has never been sensible. He was a delirious, an excessively delirious man. It was very easy for me to agree with the last interview and that's why I believe it wasn't really him speaking."

Levy: "I'll refer to the Sartre that you knew to show you that you're wrong. When he attacks the propertied (*les ayant-droits*) it's not against organized society or caste society.... He means, first of all: every individual who doesn't feel that he is essentially a "stranger" (recall that he defined consciousness as being 'diasporic'). This idea of "total strangeness" or "oddness" ["étrangeté radicale"]...is what separates the man in search of authenticity from what he calls the 'bastard,' the 'privileged.' This meant a calling into question of the principles of society and a calling into question of every one of his analyses. He changed since *Being and Nothingness* and later, since the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. He changed his principles, and this is a noble thing to do. I believe that, in conceding too quickly that every society is organized, that there are rights and duties, you neglect what is a basic requirement for Sartre: to never think of the institution as long as some people are excluded from it. Thanks to this critique of the "propertied" we will perhaps have the opportunity in the coming years to talk about human rights without sounding ridiculous."

Aron: "As for what you said, I would concede that the basic weakness of Sartre's political thought is the fact that he never developed a convincing analysis of today's societies and of the reasons for which one should choose one over another...and his critique of society was the critique of every society."

[To return to Sartre and the issue of compromise, Aron, in order to refute Lévy, recalls the period when Sartre was in favor of the Munich appeasement, simply because he was a pacifist. Then the discussion takes up Sartre's mistakes.]

Poirot. Delpech: "It's been said many times that Sartre was wrong, that he misled himself, that he followed an erratic course. Why should Sartre not be mistaken, why must there be a coherence to his life from start to finish? If his mistakes are counted, can it be said that you, Raymond Aron, you *many times* made fewer mistakes than he? The pupil Aron would then get a better grade than the pupil Sartre. It doesn't bother me at all that one could say Sartre was mistaken a lot, because what interests me is his method. One often has the impression that he was politically involved in order to roast the bourgeoisie, in order to see just how far he could be tolerated. This is true of many of his alleged leftist dealings, when he used his notoriety in order to carry out certain actions; for example, when he became director of *La Cause du Peuple*.

Glucksman: "But that was serious. He thought that *La Cause du Peuple* was a bad newspaper, badly written and in the last analysis rather deceptive. But he committed himself to it anyway, bringing the weight of his name and of his courage. Then, it was a matter of freedom and the right of opinion, because *Le Cause du Peuple* was a

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banned newspaper which had the right to be distributed even if it was a stupid one."

[Later in the debate Glucksman brings up what he terms Sartre's three periods: the first, when the basic issue was fascism; the second, that of anti-colonialism which is "incredible for a whole generation," evoking the "manifesto of the 121" and the right to rebel against a military which is using torture. Finally, the third period, the conclusion of which Sartre did not survive, which confronted him with the issue of Gulag, an issue he had broached in 1950 in *Les Temps Modernes*. This gives Raymond Aron the opportunity to raise the issue of Sartre as a fellow traveler and of his ties with the C.P.]

Aron: "We still have this mystery: having written the article on the Gulag, several years later he is a fellow traveler during Stalinism's worst period. This remains incomprehensible for us whatever the feelings one might have. How, while knowing what he had written, could he forget it for a number of years, and act as if he had forgotten it?"

Lévy: "But he didn't forget it!"

Aron: "He no longer spoke about it."

Levy: "When you consider the expression 'one should not despair in Billancourt' which has so often been used against Sartre, it can mean that one should hide certain truths so that workers can continue their struggle. Was it really so in Sartre's case? Did he bend at the level of the basic demands of his thought? ...He never considered compromise. When he said, 'Man must be ushered into Marxism' he really thought so, and moreover he found it very stimulating."

Aron: "But his political stances during the time he was a fellow traveler? If there wasn't a compromise on the intellectual level there was one on the level of action."

Levy: "He was aware of what was going on in the Soviet union. He never compromised on the level of what he was seeking — and what was he seeking? Let's talk about the 'barrel of Billancourt.' Is it so common to see a great thinker go and speak to workers and say quite interesting things about the alliance between workers and intellectuals? ...This certainly contradicts the inherent pessimism you were talking about."

[Returning to Sartre's mistakes, Glucksman acknowledges that "they were enormous" and, according to him, "reveal the internalization of the cold war." He recalls that it was "a difficult time when one was shooting from the hip with very tough arguments." He holds up as an example the violence with which Sartre attacked the young Calude Lefort. "He was very harshly dealt with.... For that matter I don't think we have the right to give good or bad grades." Then the question arises about Sartre and power. Poirot-Delpech says that the government feared Sartre. Aron does not quite agree. As the discussion continues, the television program that was denied Sartre is mentioned.]

Glucksman: "In this program he exposed himself to what we've begun to do here, to a debate concerning his past — a harsh, difficult debate. I prepared this program. My intention was to discuss Sartre and Solzhenitsyn in relation to communism, for they both had approximately the same experience."

Aron (interrupting him): "Sorry, it wasn't at all the same experience: one *knew* the Gulag, the other wrote an article about it which he subsequently forgot. He also wrote a play in order to ridicule the dissidents — *Nekrassov*."

[Just before the end of the discussion, Aron clarifies his judgement of Sartre.]

Aron: "You want to provoke me to say things that I don't want to: Sartre was an important personality and he combined talents that one rarely sees together. He was able to write *Being and Nothingness, The Wall*, plays and *Nausea*. Sartre was a free man *par excellence*. But this free man wasn't always free within his freedom. Neither

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free nor in harmony with his own values. When he is presented as someone who always spoke the truth, he did in fact always speak what he thought to be the truth, you cannot say today that the man who was the fellow traveler of Stalinism had always spoken the truth or you would sound absurd. his was a severe conscience, but a conscience that was capable of error like all consciences. It isn't because he used to always tell the truth that he's a liar today. It is because he was a great personality who is now gone."

OUR SARTRE

by Paul Piccone

Because of the immense intellectual gulf that separated Europe and the U.S. during the 50s and early 60s, the American reception of Sartre has been very selective. For those of us who came of age politically at that time, the Sartre we were confronted with was the existentialist, the literary critic, or the esoteric philosopher of Parisian cafes engaged in interminable debates with Aron, Camus, Merleau-Ponty, etc. — but never the "political" Sartre of "The Ghost of Stalin" or of "The Communists and Peace." I remember first buying a hard-cover copy of *Being and Nothingness* soon after I learned to read English in a second-hand Rochester bookstore in 1959, not because I knew of the book itself, but because of the cheap price for such a fat volume ($2.00), as well as curiosity for an author who had already crept up in footnotes a few times too many to be safely ignored. Of course, at that time, I did not bother to read much more than a few sections whose heavy metaphysical language quickly turned me off. But then, again, that was a period when I considered Bertrand Russell the greatest philosopher ever and scientific method the path to Utopia. Only after collecting dust on my shelf for several years and after I had come to appreciate Husserl did I finally accord *Being and Nothingness* the kind of attention that it deserved. But at that time it came to be seen as an "early" work eclipsed by the political insights of the newly discovered *Critique*.

The same thing did not happen with *Search for a Method* which I bought new, in hard-back, immediately after it came out in the Fall of 1963 — one of the two copies that the Indiana University bookstore had seen fit to order. By that time I had become interested in Marxism and, although I had already been warned many times about the "petit bourgeois" character of existentialism, I still wanted to read what the other side had to say on the matter. Yet, American society seemed so absurd as to require drastic political intervention rather than what at that time seemed a futile moralistic opposition condemned to failure from the very beginning because of some unalterable human predicament. I remember avidly reading the book along with C. Wright Mill's works, Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution* and Hegel's *Phenomenology* — which at that time I had trouble understanding in any of the various languages I tried to read it in on the mistaken assumption that the translation rather than the content baffled my comprehension. Although I remember being very impressed with Sartre's political sense, his understanding of Marxism as well as the philosophical arguments, the general framework seemed very foreign and embroiled with a kind of Marxism which, while still alive in Europe, had little to say to students in the U.S. for whom Marxism was just being rediscovered in a form untarnished by any official communist party, or by the history of subsequent Marxist thought. After all, I was part of that generation

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which, politically sterilized by the culture of the Cold War years, came to Marxism not as a political or economic theory, but as primarily an intriguing philosophical alternative with exciting social consequences.

Only in the Summer of 1968, when I finally struggled through the *Critique*, did I try to come to terms with Sartre's political and social thought. It was at that time, or shortly before, that, because of the changed political climate, Sartre the political and social theoretician began to be appreciated in the U.S. — not just by scattered specialists in French thought but by those members of the New Left attempting to understand their experiences in the broader context of world events. What had been an erratic individualistic reception thus rapidly became part of the common conceptual framework of a rapidly totalizing political movement. But at that time, to a New Left inebriated with the possibility of generating a "new man" and a "new society" in the wake of the Civil Rights and the anti-war movements, Sartre seemed hopelessly conservative with his insistence on the ineradicable monadic ego and the impossibility of stable collectivities. A few copies of Axelos' French translation of Lukacs' *History and Class Consciousness* had already begun to circulate among those of us who could read foreign languages — and we even succeeded in unearthing an original German edition in the Yale University Library, as well as a just-published Italian translation. From such not-yet-fully-digested or thought through perspectives, things such as the practico-inert, the totalizing agency, and seriality felt like cold water on burning coals at a time when some of us were beginning to think we really would find the beach under the pavement. Thus, although Sartre had already become one of the intellectual reference points to whom we kept returning, we could not yet appropriate him fully. It was only with the disintegration of the New Left in the early 1970s that he finally made sense to us.

The experience of organizing demonstrations, calling mass meetings, plotting the takeover of administrative buildings, etc., slowly convinced us of the profundity of Sartre's vision. While there were always too many anarchists in our midst to prevent politics from deteriorating to a purely manipulative level, we gradually came to appreciate the dynamics of totalization so well described in the *Critique*, the ineliminability of the gap between the individual and the group, and the sheer weight of the past. Ironically enough, Sartre became "ours" precisely when he himself was sliding into Maoist populism and we were working our way out of it.

In 1971, after having failed to have a major revolutionary impact on society, we at least succeeded in taking over the Student Organizations of SUNY at Buffalo and were able to organize an international conference on "Political Organization." Of course, we invited Sartre to be one of the main speakers, along with Marcuse, Gorz, and scores of other leading Left intellectuals. It was a great disappointment to learn that Sartre could not come and, from talking to Gorz afterward, to find out that he did not see much value in academic gatherings of this type as opposed to more immediately relevant political activities — such as selling *La Cause du Peuple* on street corners. To those of us who had worked our way out of the factory through night school, or otherwise with working-class backgrounds, Sartre's attitude seemed to manifest precisely that "petit-bourgeois" guilt that the official communists had always charged Sartre with.

As the 70s wore on, Sartre's philosophical profile kept growing larger with our own coming of age. The earlier messianistic hope of grounding the dialectic phenomenologically and thus rehabilitating the traditional Marxist vision of a communist society free of exploitation, inequality and injustice, ran into difficulties. The dialectic could be grounded phenomenologically, but precisely at the cost of dumping all the traditional Marxist baggage and resulting in a socio-political position very close to that of

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Sartre in the *Critique*. Commitment remained as a major ethical-political category, but without any of the earlier collective eschatological expectations. The ineliminability of the practico-inert and the inevitable reassertion of seriality forced us to pay considerably more attention to mediating socio-political institutions and to distrust those transcendental agencies which, in the name of collective subjectivity, reintroduce regimes as brutal as any in the past. It is not surprising that this turn of events led us to a much more critical evaluation of the Russian and the Chinese experiences, and to the eventual debunking, on the part of most of us, of Marxism as such.

In a sense, Sartre was always a couple of stops ahead of us and, even if we disagreed with whatever seemingly misdirected politics he might have become involved with, we never stopped learning from him. Although he is now dead, his visions and moral commitment live on even with us, on the other side of an intellectual ocean that often seemed impossible to cross.

SARTRE

by Harvey Blume

Who will teach me
now Sartre's dead?
And I
unteachable?
Who is there
will save me steps.

Let mind be dialectical again
in search of itself.

Let nothingness still crawl
inside being,
a worm.

Let another
say as well
where freedom
turns into its opposite

moment to moment
aeon to aeon.

Let them stuff his obit
with fact
but print it daily.

Let his death remain timely

conversation
to finish alone.

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Book Reviews:

Agnes Heller. *On Instincts.* Holland: Van Gorcum, 1979. 97pp.
Agnes Heller. *A Theory of Feelings.* Holland: Van Gorcum, 1979. 224pp.

During the 1960s, the question of philosophical anthropology was debated in Marxist circles with a passion and vehemence that seems remote today. Paralleling the French existentialist Marxists' struggles with communist orthodoxy in the name of Marxist humanism, the *Praxis* philosophers and other East-European thinkers such as Schaff discovered in the project of a Marxist philosophical anthropology a framework for both criticizing established theories and defending humanist reforms in existing socialist countries. This phase of Marxist debates came to an end with the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the Althusserian "scientific" Thermidor.

Agnes Heller has not only remained faithful to the project of a Marxist philosophical anthropology, but she has carried it beyond the level of generality encountered in the works of Petrovic and Schaff, generating such critical concepts as "radical needs" that may bridge philosophical anthropology and a Marxian critical theory of advanced society.[1] *On Instincts* and *A Theory of Feelings* are two of six essays on social anthropology. The themes of the subsequent essays will be the theory of needs, the theory of morality, the theory of personality and the theory of history. Heller is uneasy about describing her project as social anthropology, since the term is the one by which the most prominent school of Anglo-American ethnology (Radcliffe-Brown, Evans Pritchard, Ruth Benedict) describes itself. Moreover, since man is essentially a social being, to speak of a social anthropology is a non-informative tautology. But Heller writes: "The term indicates where I mean to place the emphasis in my examination of the 'essence' of man. It indicates that in my analysis it is not the process of man becoming human that is primary...but rather the potentials contained in the human species." These potentials are not to be found in an eventual modification of the biological makeup of man, but "we must seek the human potentials in the transformation of the second nature (the psychological-social nature), and not that of his 'first nature' " (*On Instincts*, p. 1). Heller is concerned in both works to evaluate the theories and empirical evidence of biological anthropology to prove that these have not discredited the Marxian idea of the essence of man. "According to Marx the constituents of the human species are: societality, consciousness, objectivation, universality and freedom. These are what characterize humanity since its formation, as opposed to the world of animals. Hence these are the potentials of man. The process of realization of these potentials is human history itself" (*On Instincts,* p. 18).

The Marxian postulate of species-essence has a double status: it describes the distinguishing characteristics of that natural species called man, and it is a practical-normative axiom in a Marxian theory of value and ethics. "The possibility of the appropriation of species-essence by every individual" writes Heller, "is according to Marx and in my opinion 'real history,' and this becoming is absolutely necessary for the further development and building in of the capacities of the species, in a process that is intended by and conscious to everyone" (p. 18). The double status of the category of 'species-essence' — descriptive on the one hand and practical-normative on the other — is not a unique feature of Marxist philosophical anthropology. It indicates the double perspective characteristic of philosophical anthropology in general. According to Kant, "A systematically conceived teaching of the Knowledge of Man

1. Gajo Petrovic, *Marxism in the Mid-twentieth Century* (New York, 1971); Adam Schaff, "Der Marxistische Humanismus," *Marxismus und das Menschliche Individuum* (Frankfurt, 1969), pp. 219-239; Agnes Heller, *The Theory of Need in Marx* (New York, 1976).

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(Anthropology) can be undertaken either in physiological or in pragmatic perspective." Physiological anthropology investigates what "Nature has made out of Man," while a pragmatic anthropology studies "what he, as freely acting being, makes, can or should make out of himself." A philosophical anthropology is always pragmatic, insofar as it views the findings of empirical anthropology (what nature has made of man) in terms of what man can be and should become. "Such an anthropology will not be called pragmatic," continues Kant, "when it merely contains an extensive knowledge of things in the world, for example, of animals, plants and minerals in different lands and climates, but such world knowledge will be called pragmatic, only when it contains knowledge about man as citizens of the world (*Weltbürger*)." [2] To know the world, according to Kant, is understanding a play that one has observed. But to have a world, in the sense pragmatic anthropology requires, is to be a participant in the world. The standpoint of philosophical anthropology — the question of man not only as he is, but also as he can and should be — presupposes a normative specification of the addressees of this question. Kant names them 'world citizens.' We also know from Kant's writings on history that the world citizens' arena of action is universal history, which is a regulative idea for viewing the history of mankind as a unified process. But it is also a constitutive ideal for the world-citizen who wants to shape the course of history.[3] Both ideals — world citizenship and universal history — are Heller's as well. In clear recognition of this Kantian heritage, she ends her *Theory of Feelings* with the remark that "Humanity is no longer an abstract idea, but a problem, hence it must become a constitutive principle. To become an individual, to become rich in many-sided, qualitative feelings depends on whether mankind can become a constitutive idea, a problem for the individual. The sufferings of mankind must change into pain...in order for us to become involved in the case of mankind. Help yourself — help others" (*A Theory of Feelings*, p. 244). The normative addressees of Heller's philosophical anthropology are social agents with the potential to make humanity a constitutive principle of their lives. In social and historical terms, these world citizens are yet to emerge. But the "radicals of mood" of the 1960s, insofar as they can become the "concrete enthusiasts" of the 1980s, have at least the possibility to fulfill this role (*A Theory of Feelings,* pp. 228-241). Heller here shifts from philosophical anthropology to social theory and cultural criticism to analyze those concrete social and historical conditions under which universal history can become a future principle of action and of social organization. Those familiar with Lukacs' *History and Class Consciousness* may ask themselves an uneasy question: Has Lukacs' most prominent student remained only too faithful to her teacher and replaced the universal subject-object of History with an empirical and normative abstraction called 'species-essence' which searches for historical agents to bring it to life? Before attempting to answer this undoubtedly irritating question, it is necessary to raise a more general one. Why does Heller consider it necessary at this time to pursue a Marxist philosophical anthropology in the first place?

It is disappointing that in the two works under discussion the reader will not find an answer to this question. *On Instincts* and *A Theory of Feelings* continue a line of argumentation whose most explicit justification is in Heller's earlier work, "Towards a Marxist Theory of Value." Here Heller claims that "Marx did not *work out* a universal concept of value, although he had a fundamental value concept (abundance) and

2. Immanuel Kant, *Anthropologie in Pragmatischer Hinsicht, Werke in Zehn Bänden*, vol. 10 (Darmstadt, 1971), pp. 399-400.

3. Immanuel Kant, "Idea of a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View" (1784), in *On History*, L.W. Beck, editor (New York, 1963).

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basic value axioms."[4] Abundance means the many-sided unfolding of the essential powers of the species. For Marxism there are two value axioms: value is whatever helps the enrichment of the power of the species, and the highest value is the ability of individuals to appropriate the abundance of the species.[5] The category of species essence is prior to that of abundance, since only when the human species is considered to be one that unfolds its potentials in history can the further development and the reappropriation of such potentials by individuals be a primary value concept. Species essence is both a priori (as a value postulate) and a posteriori (as a descriptive postulate). For Heller, a philosophical anthropology has the function of spelling out the most general vision of man underlying a Marxist theory of value. In a nutshell, Heller considers the normative and value foundations of Marxism to be provided by a philosophical anthropology. But how plausible is her program, according to which Marxist philosophical anthropology is a *Weltanschauung*, a vision of man, neither discredited nor confirmed by science, and which should supply the normative foundations of Marxism?

"I sought a concept of instincts," Heller writes, "which, on the one hand, corresponds to the facts uncovered by the empirical and experimental science at its present level, but at the same time satisfies my philosophical, theoretical and my value-hypotheses as well.... I sought a concept of instincts on the basis of which I could argue for the 'openness,' the 'plasticity' of man...a concept of instinct which would allow for the infinite potential of human nature" (p. 17). This value-hypothesis, while not one that can be derived from science, is at least not disproved by it. "A careful interpretation of the materials and of the interpretations have led me to conclude that the facts not only could theoretically be interpreted along the line of my own theories and values, but that the strongest facts and the most convincing interpretations also suggest this interpretation" (p. 17). Heller considers the works of ethologists and anthropologists like Lorenz (in his second period), Tinbergen, Gehlen and Clässens to have supplied the "strongest facts" and the "most convincing interpretations" for her own concept of the essence of man. With Gehlen and Clässens she agrees that the formation of man is the history of the demolition of instinct guidance. In the case of animals, inner and outer stimuli bring about a type of behavior characteristic of the species. Man, however, is a teleological being capable of an infinite number of movements and behavior not biologically given. According to Gehlen, man, endowed with a natural 'plasticity' of movement, lives in a hiatus between instinct and behavior, between a naturally given physical frame and his body, between environment and world. During the formation of the human species, claims Claessens, the role of instinct guidance in animals is assumed in man by the system of social custom and institutions that insures repetition, regulation and schemata of behavior. Heller calls this historically evolved second nature the "system of species objectivations in itself" (*an sich seiende gattungsmässige Objektivationen*) and distinguishes them from the system of "species objectivations for themselves" (*für sich*

4. Agnes Heller, "Towards a Marxist Theory of Value," Andrew Arato, translator in *Kinesis*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Fall, 1972), p. 22 (emphasis in the original).

5. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

6. Cf. Konrad Lorenz, *Studies in Human and Animal Behavior* (London, 1970); N. Tinbergern, *The Study of Instinct* (Oxford, 1951); Arnold Gehlen, *Der Mensch. Seine Natur und seine Stellung in der Welt* (Frankfurt, 1966); Dieter Clässen, *Instinkt, Psyche, Geltung* (Köln, 1968). For a good summary of the various implications of the concept of aggression for social theory, cf. also Helmut Nolte, "Ueber gesellschaftstheoretische Implikationen des Aggressionsbegriffs," *Kritik der Anthropologie,* Wolf Lepenies und Helmut Nolte, editors (München, 1971), pp. 103-105.

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seiende gattungsmässige Objektivationen) — those self-conscious works of art, law, morality and religion in which, presumably, the human species makes itself into its own object of reflection and expression.

On Instincts argues against several schools of ethologists and anthropologists who maintain aggression to be either a given drive of the species (traditional type of naturalism) or a universal but environment-caused phenomenon (behaviorism, neo-Freudians and environmentalism).[7] Heller claims that since neither the inner nor the external stimuli, nor the behavior they elicit, can be interpreted unequivocally as 'drive of aggression' or as a 'situation eliciting aggression,' independently of given contexts and socio-cultural differences, naturalist theories have little plausibility. Furthermore, no theory of aggression has as yet been able to establish the presence of a law-like relation between certain kinds of external and internal stimuli and types of behavior classified as aggressive. Heller is more troubled by the claims of certain kinds of environmentalists — namely, by those who attribute the overwhelming presence of aggression in social life either to frustration or to the existence of particularistic group integration. When frustration is defined as the response of agents to the obstacles hindering them from realizing their goals, "since it is not possible for human beings to become adults and coexist in a society in which the individual never meets frustration in one goal or another" (*On Instincts*, p. 77), it seems necessary to conclude that aggression is an inherent component of social existence. Also, since particularistic group identification, or identification with a "we consciousness," is built into human identity formation, and since every such "we consciousness" must distinguish itself from a "they consciousness," aggression towards other groups appears universal. Heller criticizes both positions from a pragmatic viewpoint: to diminish the goal-oriented frustration that appears permanent in social life involves transcending anthropology and envisioning social and economic conditions for the transformation of the social division of labor (p. 95). To eliminate group-generated aggression, it is necessary to cultivate "radical tolerance as a necessary subjective precondition of a possible future" (p. 78). Radical tolerance entails the recognition of legitimate

7. Heller's treatment of neo-Freudian theories of aggression leaves something to be desired. By reducing the concept of environment to the immediate parental environment of the child, Erikson and Horney seem to argue that by re-educating parents the formation of aggression could be prevented. Heller therefore considers their work an echo to the "greatest extent the spirit of Enlightenment" (*On Instincts*, p. 79). This is a very cursory dismissal of the issues raised by Freudian and neo-Freudian theories of aggression. Heller might have considered instead the work of Mitscherlich, for example, who argues that the dominant socialization practices of Western civilization limit man's relation with elementary natural life-needs to such an extent that the development of critical ego achievements are hindered. Cf. Mitscherlich, "Ueber Feindseligkeit und hergestellte Dummheit," in *Ansprachen anlässlich des Friedenspreises* (Frankfurt, 1969), pp. 42, 44. Aggression is the assertive reaction of the ego to the limitations imposed on it by repressive socialization. It is possible to combine the emphasis on early childhood environment with a critique of socialization practices that have dominated the history of the formation of the species in the West. The early family environment does not need to be juxtaposed to the larger social context, as Heller tends to do. But a critical psychoanalytical perspective might be combined with a critique of authority and domination relations which are transmitted to the child through early socialization in the family. Heller does not even mention the Frankfurt School studies on *Authority and the Family*, nor Marcuse's attempt to synthesize Marx and Freud in a critique of industrial civilization. Marcuse is described as having taken into account the alternative "that a sick society with its sick or neurotic individuals becomes incapable of functioning and collapses" (*On Instincts*, p. 812), a characterization that hardly does justice to the critical implications of Marcuse's thesis that the memory of repressed original immediacy may provide us with a future utopian impulse whereby we can transform the demand for fulfillment and happiness into a condition for transcending existing society.

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differences in social life, but overcomes the experience of "strangeness" felt toward them.

While Heller's solution seems plausible, her readiness to accept that any form of particularistic group identification leads to aggression towards other groups seems questionable. First, the category of 'groups' is too general and abstract to define the specific modes of identification, allegiance and commitment required of individuals by various social units. The kind of identification demanded from us by, for example, the family, must be differentiated from the kind of identification required by the professional community or by political institutions. Second, in differentiated and stratified modern societies, it is not group, but role identification that becomes a primary mode of socialization. The modern individual is required to be many personalities at once. It may be precisely the breakdown of clear-cut human identification patterns and the emergence of ever more diffuse and mutually incompatible roles that generates aggression as a response to helplessness in the face of the increasing complexity, opacity and impersonality of social life. But it hardly seems possible to settle such an issue from the standpoint of a philosophical anthropology alone. The question whether human aggression is or is not an inevitable aspect of particularistic socialization can only be answered by considering the historical evolution of different patterns of socialization, stratification and integration; in other words, by a historical sociology.

This discussion points to a more general problem that becomes particularly clear in Heller's discussion of feelings. The problem is: can the level of generality at which a philosophical anthropology proceeds do justice to the empirical and concrete content of human history and societies? The first half of a *Theory of Feelings* is a general phenomenological discussion. Heller's thesis is that feeling, which she describes as "being involved in something," is as fundamental a mode of being in the world as intentionality or language. Rather, there is no contrast between intentionality, language and affective being in the world. Heller quotes Wittgenstein: "Consider the tone of voice, inflection, gestures as essential parts of our experience, not as inessential accompaniments or mere means of communication" (p. 55). Feeling is an inherent structural part of all acting and thinking, not their mere accompaniment. The dichotomy between emotion, cognition, and volition, which most moral theory and positivist psychology accepts as a given is, according to Heller, a product of the 'disenchantment' of world. "Weber described this split as a historical resultant, as a problematic fact, whereas Freud expressed it as a life feeling, as a tragic fact" (p. 2).

Heller therefore pursues a different theoretical strategy at this point to demonstrate her thesis that "Man is unified, but the personality is split" (p. 4). She undertakes a sociology of feelings to disclose the historical and social genesis of the split between emotion, cognition and volition. This is indeed the most original and exciting discussion in the two books and is worth examining in some detail before considering the relation between it and her philosophical anthropology. According to Heller, with the advent of bourgeois society the public world of politics is separated from and juxtaposed to the civil-private world of market relations and to the intimate sphere of the household. Bourgeois society splits the personality into the abstract *citoyen* and property owner on the one hand, and the concrete private individual on the other. Natural and blood kinship relations no longer determine the public status of the individual. This results in an incommensurability between the individual's public and social tasks, and his private world of feelings. "The emotional household becomes individual; it is no longer a matter of the affects conforming to the prescriptions of customs and norms, but rather is connected to the conscious evaluation of individual

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opportunities and inborn qualities, and along with it, to the development of one's own individual capacities" (p. 184).

But this discovery of privacy, of the intimacy of the household, is also a process of "disenchantment" in the Weberian sense. The advent of modernity in the West signifies the destruction of those world-views, cosmologies and religions, in which nature and spirit were united, and the external world replete with social-symbolic significance.[8] The retreat of the emotions into the "household of feelings" means a separation between public norms and affects, values and emotions. There emerges a tendency to subsume all emotions under the main categories of the "useful" and the "harmful," a tendency to view emotions through the instrumental and strategic lenses of the market. The obverse of this "subsuming mind" is "conventional sentimentality." When the only emotions that can be articulated publicly are strategic ones, private emotions assume a sentimental character. Through them the respectable bourgeois gives vent to those feelings and affects which, by remaining closed off from general social interaction, also remain immune to intersubjective cultivation. This tendency toward Victorian philistinism is one among many possible emotional dialectics of the public and private, the strategic and sentimental. The "abstract enthusiasm" of the *citoyen* and the bourgeois revolutionary; the "great heart" of the Napoleonic hero in search of new possibilities; the romantic moralist revolt against bourgeois society — described by Hegel as "the law of the heart and the frenzy of self conceit"[9] — are other emotional types characteristic of the bourgeois world. Heller traces the dynamics of the bourgeois world of feelings from its classical beginnings to its decline during the period between World War I and the Great Depression. During the decline, distinctions between public and private, abstract citizen and concrete bourgeois give way to a different condition. "The unhappy consciousness becomes generalized into a *condition humaine* and thus the class-like identification ceases" (p. 193). Feelings become reactions to an unreal world, which the individual can no longer hope to influence, and behind which he no longer can discern the logic of some cause and effect relations: the disorientation and helplessness of European consciousness in face of monopoly capitalism, world war and totalitarian beginnings.

Between Heller's philosophical anthropology and her sociology of feelings, however, there is an unresolved theoretical tension. The formation of human feelings is described as a process of anthropological and sociological homeostasis: "feelings regulate, on the one hand, the preservation of the subject (within a given social context) and they also regulate the expansion of the subject (the Ego) on the other" (p. 35). The interruption of this homeostasis threatens both the preservation and expansion of human subjectivity. But homeostasis is a naturalistic category. It postulates a state of preservation and expansion as that toward which the Ego evolves. For beings whose identity formation occurs through symbolically mediated linguistic communication, and if we are to take Lacan seriously, even whose unconscious is structured like a language, neither the category of preservation nor that of Ego expansion has an unequivocal and anthropologically constant meaning. The concept of "homeostasis" reduces linguistic and symbolic content articulated by the Ego ideals and prevailing modes of subjectivity of given socio-cultural formations to the neutral categories of "preservation" and "expansion." And if these categories have no anthropologically constant meaning, what is their explanatory force? Does not Heller reintroduce, at the meta-level of her philosophical anthropology, an assumption (Man

8. Max Weber, *Wissenschaft als Beruf* (Berlin, 1967), pp. 16ff.

9. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, J.B. Baillie, translator (New York, 1967), pp. 391ff.

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is one) that seems hardly to be supported by her sociological analysis (the personality is split)? Unless she means, of course, that Man was one in the period prior to the emergence of the bourgeois world and that civil society, with its distinction between private and public, family, market and the state, instigated a fall from Grace, and a fissure in the original union of man with himself, his fellow men and with Nature.[10] I hesitate to attribute this catechism of the *1844 Manuscripts* to Heller. But if she does not mean to imply that the split personality is a consequence of bourgeois society alone, then the statement that "Man is one" must be replaced by one more suited to the concrete content of historically variant modes of subjectivity and identity formation. For in any minimally differentiated society, the personality is split in various ways, though not exactly along the lines we encounter in the bourgeois world.[11]

I posed the question: can the level of generality at which philosophical anthropology proceeds do justice to the empirical and concrete content of human history and societies? 'Doing justice' is, of course, too vague a term to define the set of issues the question suggests. I will enumerate two that Heller never explicitly discusses: (1) The relationship between philosophy and the empirical sciences of man. (2) The theoretical place of philosophical anthropology for Marxism.

Although never explicitly stating it, Heller seems to presuppose that philosophy is still "the queen of the sciences," synthesizing into a coherent vision the results yielded by the specialized forms of human inquiry. This assumption is a regression behind the Kantian critical philosophy into a form of *prima philosophia*. It seems hardly plausible today to neglect the problem of epistemology: how can philosophy regain access to material problems in view of the claims of the specialized sciences to be the only cognitively valid mode of inquiry?[12] A philosophical anthropology that does not explicitly question the claim to knowledge of the empirical sciences of man runs the risk of becoming yet another *Weltanschauung*, a *prima philosophia* based on fundamental value postulates. A consequence that Heller admits — but too readily.

Second, the necessity of a philosophical anthropology has been defended to supply Marxism either with a fundamental ontology or with an epistemology, both of which it lacks. In the 1930s, Marcuse attempted to integrate Marxist philosophical anthropology with a phenomenology of human *Dasein*. Labor was as fundamental a mode of being in the world as "thrownness," "historicity" or "anxiety unto Death," Marcuse argued, for human existence was only possible through the action of the self upon an external world already given to it. This fundamental subject-object relation Marcuse characterized through the category of labor.[13] Marxist philosophical

10. The *1844 Manuscripts* continue the idealization of pre-capitalist, and particularly of Greek society, which is a leitmotif of German romantic thinking. Through the anti-modernist bias of conservative *Kultursoziologie* in Germany (Tönnies, Alfred Weber, Simmel), this motif of a pre-capitalist unity conveniently juxtaposed to the *Entzweiung* produced by civil society finds its way into Lukacs' analysis of reification. Cf. Michael Löwy's excellent analysis, *Pour une Sociologie des Intellectuels Révolutionaires, L'évolution Politique de Lukacs (1909-1929)* (Paris, 1976), pp. 17-107.

11. Michel Foucault's many analyses of the darker aspects of Western rationality, when freed of their negative eschatalogical bias, are contributions to a historical sociology of Western subjectivity. Cf. particularly *Discipline and Punish* (New York, 1979). The pioneering study on the formation and transformation of everyday subjectivity is Norbert Elias, *Ueber den Prozess der Zivilisation*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt, 1976).

12. J. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, J. Shapiro, translator (Beacon, 1971), pp. 1-65.

13. Herbert Marcuse, "On the Philosophical Foundations of the Concept of Labor" in *Telos*, no. 16 (Summer, 1973), pp. 9ff.

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anthropology became a phenomenological analysis of the permanent features of the human life-world. In *Knowledge and Human Interests,* Habermas rejected all such attempts to derive a fundamental ontology or a phenomenology of labor from the *1844 Manuscripts*. The Marxian thesis that man produces himself in history, Habermas argued, placed man's becoming human in the medium of instrumental activity alone. When the dimension of interaction, the linguistic and symbolically mediated communication of the species was neglected, then the status of Marxism as critical reflection on symbolically and linguistically mediated structures of human domination would be obscured. Habermas therefore argued for a Marxist anthropology that would be at the same time a transcendental epistemology. This science of man would analyze those constitutive interests, those permanent life activities through which the species created a world and came to know the world it had created.[14]

But both alternatives entailed problems: Marcuse abandoned his early synthesis of Marx and Heidegger because a phenomenological analysis of the permanent features of a life world lacked the critical thrust of concrete reflection upon the present. Fundamental ontology transformed a historically given condition into one of eternity.[15] It could be no foundation for a critical theory of society, which conceived of the present through the perspective of possible future emancipation. In *Eros and Civilization,* Marcuse developed philosophical anthropology into a critique of industrial civilization. The unresolved conceptual relation between a Marxian transcendental epistemology conceived as philosophical anthropology, and historical evolution as an empirical process, is a main reason for Habermas' effort to formulate a theory of the ontogenetic and phylogenetic development of speech and action capacities in his later work.[16] Heller chooses a third path, but without so much as a brief discussion of the problems suggested by other efforts to develop a Marxist philosophical anthropology. Her failure to address either the epistemological relation between philosophy and the sciences of man or the cognitive place of a philosophical anthropology within Marxism greatly reduces the plausibility of her general project, which the reader is almost asked to accept on faith.

In fact, the viability of a Marxist philosophical anthropology must be radically questioned, for this philosophical anthropology is the most articulate example of certain no longer acceptable 19th-century transcendentals. These transcendentals are Man, History and Labor. Since not only Heller, but critical Marxism in general has accepted their validity, the issue is worth discussing. These transcendentals originate with Marx's attempt to outwit Hegel by using Hegel's own weapons. In the last and third of the *1844 Manuscripts*, Marx replaces the Hegelian formula that "Spirit becomes and comes to know itself through reflecting upon its externalizations in History" by another Hegelianism: "the human species becomes and comes to know itself in the process of producing (*Selbsterzeugung*) itself through the activity of labor in history."[17] But the subject Man is no less abstract than the subject Spirit. The thesis that History is the self-creation of Man is no less problematic than the assertion that History is the unfolding of the Freedom of Spirit. The Hegelian category of

14. Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests, op.cit.*, p. 63.

15. Herbert Marcuse, "Zum Begriff des Wesens," *Schriften*, vol. 3 (Frankfurt, 1979), pp. 45-85.

16. Jürgen Habermas, "Towards a Reconstruction of Historical Materialism" in *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, T. McCarthy, translator (Boston, 1979), pp. 130-178.

17. Karl Marx, "Kritik der Hegelschen Dialiktik und Philosophie überhaupt" in *Oekonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte, Marx und Engels Werke, Ergänzungsband* (Berlin, 1968), pp. 568-588.

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Entäusserung is no less inadequate, and may be even more subtle, than the Marxian *Vergegenständlichung*. These categories — Spirit, Man, History, Labor — are transcendentals in the following sense. They enabled Hegel and Marx to articulate the conditions for the possibility of a universalizing process in the West. This was initiated by the emergence of civil society and the French Revolution and became world history with the spread of capitalism into a world market. Better than anyone else, Hegel knew that it was only appropriate to speak of Man, of this subject abstracted from linguistic, social, political and cultural identity, within the "systems of needs," of commodity exchanges among private individuals.[18] Marx unequivocally states that it was bourgeois society in which the activity of objectification *qua* labor was universalized into a human condition.[19] While Kant argued that the concept of a unified History was a regulative ideal for those who remained faithful to the ideals of the French Revolution, Hegel saw civil society as a universalizing material force which, in search of markets, destroyed prevailing national and political boundaries.[20] These transcendentals were necessary to grasp the significance of that empirical and normative process initiated by a universalizing bourgeois culture.

Today, the cognitive validity of these transcendentals has been rejected, while their normative credibility is becoming increasingly precarious. Linguistics and anthropology have replaced the category of transsubjective identity by the model of a plurality of individuals constituting their mutual identity through language and the appropriation of social and cultural norms.[21] Historians like E.P. Thompson have shown that the history of social movements cannot be reduced to whatever idealized univocal content Marxists may want to attribute to them,[22] while Braudel's studies have made us aware of the absence of synchronicity in history. History does not only have plural subjects, but also plural processes whose temporality cannot be reduced to a unique direction of time.[23] The most serious challenge to the viability of a Marxist anthropology has come from social anthropology itself. Marshall Sahlins for example writes that, in the attempt to apply the materialist conception of history and culture to the comprehension of tribal societies, he came to reject the Marxian logic which ignores "the symbolic or meaningful." Further "Marx's general formulation of culture would subordinate the societal logic of production to the instrumental logic of work, and withal transpose the symbolic coordinates of social being into the consequences of that being."[24] Sahlin replaces the Marxian concept of praxis by one of practical reason "which takes as the distinctive quality of man not that he must live in a material world, circumstances he shares with all organisms, but that he does so according to a

18. G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, T.M. Knox, translator (Oxford, 1969). "Here at the standpoint of needs...what we have before us is the composite idea which we call man. Thus this is the first time and indeed properly the only time to speak of *man* in this sense," paragraph 190, Notes, p. 127 (emphasis in the text).

19. Karl Marx, "Introduction," *Grundrisse*, M. Nicolaus, translator (Middlesex, 1973), p. 103.

20. "This inner dialectic of civil society thus drives it — or at any rate drives a specific civil society — to gush beyond its limits and seek markets, and so its necessary means of subsistence, in other lands which are either deficient in the goods it has overproduced, or else generally backward in industry." Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, paragraph 246, *op.cit.*, p. 151.

21. For a good summary of recent developments in linguistic theory of communication, speech acts, etc. consult T.M. McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," *Philosophy of Social Sciences*, 3 (1973,2), pp. 135-156; and for anthropology cf. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973).

22. E.P. Thompson, "The Poverty of Theory or an Orrery of Errors" in *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (London, 1979), pp. 231-236.

23. F. Braudel, *Capitalism and Material Life* (New York, 1976), "Introduction."

24. Marshall Sahlins, *Culture and Practical Reason* (Chicago, 1976), p. 3.

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meaningful schema of his own devising in which capacity mankind is unique."[25] Are we then in a position today to develop a Marxist philosophical anthropology which takes into account the disappearance of those 19th century transcendentals? Or does their disappearance cast doubt upon the cognitive validity of philosophical anthropology altogether?

Heller developed her philosophical anthropology in order to supply Marxism with a normative and value theory. But if the transcendentals presupposed by this anthropology are also ideological reductions, how plausible is it to build the normative foundations of Marxism upon them? We are justified in calling these transcendentals ideological because they perform the essential function of all ideologies: namely, to eliminate alterity, otherness and difference by co-opting them into an identical set of meanings. Ideology prevents the Other an articualtion of otherness. Through the categories of Man or Spirit collective intersubjectivity is reduced to transsubjective identity. The collective memory and achievements of distinct human groups, whose lived interpretations often compete with and contradict one another, are collapsed into a single, unequivocal story called History. The diversified activities of generating cultural and symbolic significances, of intersubjective communication and performance are all brought under the one-dimensional model of the subject-object relation supplied by the categories of labor, production or objectification. At first sight the disappearance of these 19th century normative ideals seems to bring in its wake once again irrationalism, relativism and historicism. Heller chooses a substantive philosophical anthropology to assert the validity of universalistic ideals in Marxism. Habermas takes refuge in the transcendental ideals of a universal pragmatics to ground the normative foundations of Marxism. But is there no alternative between the foundational illusions of a philosophical anthropology and the formal transcendental illusions of a universal pragmatics? Is it possible to construct the normative foundations of Marxism as critique by proceeding from the following: the experience of human plurality as opposed to that of transsubjective identity; the recognition of history as a web of equivocal contradictory claims as opposed to the univocal reduction of meaning in history to a single story; the acceptance of the manifold logic of human symbolic and cultural forms as opposed to the one-dimensional logic of subject and object relations?[27]

25. *Ibid.*, p. viii.

26. In "Renaissance der Anthropologie," Wolf Lepenies gives a very illuminating survey of the current state of anthropology and the possibilities of its future orientation. After stating that the "great Projects of philosophical anthropology have rarely been able to get along without recourse to metaphysics," he rejects the claims of philosophical anthropology to be a *scientia generalis* or a substitute theology or a resurrection of ontology. Lepenies develops a program for a sociological anthropology that "would see this discipline as a social science. "Sociological anthropology on the one hand extends to the open or hidden anthropological assumptions of partial sociological theories, but on the other hand it is concerned to prove the sociological determination of anthropological theories" (in Wolf Lepenies, *Soziologische Anthropologie. Materialien* (München, 1971), pp. 12-14. At first sight, Heller's project for a "social anthropology" appears compatible with Lepenies' suggestion. however, Heller does hold that social anthropology can be a *scientia generalis* or a *prima philosophia*, and at the level of concrete analysis she is less oriented to the results of cultural anthropology and ethnology than to biological anthropology. I find Lepenies' thesis convincing, however, that if something like a Marxist "science of man" is to be possible, it must begin with a *socialization theory* in which the development of human social, linguistic and sexual *competencies* are investigated in genetic as well as evolutionary perspective — a program lacking in Heller's discussion of environment-generated aggression.

27. Hannah Arendt's often misunderstood critique of Marx in the *Human Condition* was based upon her clear awareness of the extent to which Marxism has remained prisoner of 19th

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I remain convinced of the significance of Heller's main thesis that to develop the normative foundations of Marxism in the form of a theory of value, of ethics and of political philosophy is an indispensable task. And undoubtedly her discussion of feelings is a basic contribution to any such future work. But today we can preserve the utopian and critical content which Marxism once possessed by dispensing with those transcendentals of yesterday and by *situating* our vision of man in the concrete reality of the present. It is the merit of Heller's work to have made us aware of the necessity of such a program. That she has not provided the answer to all the questions her work suggests does not distract from its value.

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century transcendentals, cf. "Tradition and the Modern Age" in *Between Past and Future* (New York, 1968), pp. 17-41. Her political philosophy offers one of the few examples of a normative theory that rejected the characteristic "flight of Philosophy" from situatedness into metaphysical abstractions.

William Julius Wilson. *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions.* University of Chicago Press, 1978. $12.50.

Now and again intelligent volumes are published only to have their insights go unmined because of lack of critical reponse. All too frequently, on the other hand, plain stupid books create an interest unwarranted by their research findings or force of argument. To the latter category belongs Wilson's *The Declining Significance of Race.* Its publication has generated a shock wave throughout black academic circles. Panels have been organized specifically to consider its merits at every major association meeting of black political scientists, historians, sociologists, psychologists, philosophers and economists. Moreover, special symposia and seminars on the "Wilson thesis" have proliferated on campuses all over the U.S., and Wilson has been rewarded for the volume's popularity with chairmanship of his sociology department at the University of Chicago. Indeed, Wilson's stock has risen so much that the S&H Foundation has arranged to subsidize his inflated lecture fee to help make his wisdom available to students at the smaller, poorly endowed black colleges. Yet, *The Declining Significance of Race* is not wise. Wilson's book is of questionable scholarly merit, is ambiguously argued and is conceptually inadequate. Why, then, all the fanfare?

Wilson contends that U.S. race relations have undergone three distinct stages corresponding to prevailing modes of political economic organization. The "preindustrial, industrial, and modern industrial stages of American race relations" correspond, respectively, to "the period of *plantation economy and racial-caste oppression*...the period of *industrial expansion, class conflict, and racial oppression*...[and] the period of *progressive transition from racial inequalities to class inequalities*" (pp. 2-3, emphasis in original). The preindustrial period ended roughly by the last quarter of the nineteenth century; the industrial period ran from then until the New Deal, and the modern industrial period is the post-World War II era. The preindustrial and industrial periods are characterized by "overt efforts of whites to solidify economic racial domination (ranging from the manipulation of black labor to the neutralization or elimination of black economic competition) through various

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forms of juridical, political, and social discrimination," (p. 4). This feature distinguishes race relations of those two periods from the modern industrial pattern in which "fundamental economic and political changes have made economic class affiliation more important than race in determining Negro prospects for occupational advancement" (p. 3), and in which such barriers to black attainment "have racial significance only in their consequences, not in their origins" (p. 2).

What has happened, according to Wilson, is not that race is no longer a factor in American life but that its significance has shifted from the economy to the political and social sphere. Therefore, when boiled down to specificity, Wilson's contention is that race has declined in significance only for "occupation advancement," — an assertion that is a far, mouselike cry from the title that roars from the book jacket. However watered-down this contention may be, it still harbors significant implications. If, as Wilson maintains, occupational mobility has increased in the "modern industrial" period for certain strata of the black population with a resultant development of an Afro-American class structure, then usual assumptions about community of social policy interest among blacks must become problematic. Wilson is aware of this implication, and he identifies the interaction between middle class and "ghetto black" political agendas as today's salient dynamics of black politics (pp. 126-143).

That is the nucleus of Wilson's thesis, and at that level it is not necessarily unsound. One of his contributions is a demystification of the notion of racism — even though he himself occasionally falls back on the concept. He demystifies racism by grounding his theory of racial oppression in the context of the development of the American economic order in the South and elsewhere. This strength, however, becomes a weakness. Despite his ravings about the evils of economic determinism [1] Wilson's discussion of the economic origins of racism often fails to avoid crudeness, and as he elaborates his general thesis he strips it of its potentially critical content. Notwithstanding the author's impressive title, *The Declining Significance of Race* bounces across the surface of important social phenomena without successfully penetrating them. The results are often bizarre, as with his declaration of working class empowerment in the Jim Crow South (pp. 57-61).

A major problem with Wilson's book is precisely that sociologism that gives it its authoritative tone. Throughout the volume reified antinomies clash. In addition to a recurring, facile juxtaposition of "economic order" and "social order" (or "economy" and "polity"),[2] at the very core of Wilson's argument class and race square off. In tracing the movement from what he sees as predominantly racial to predominantly class oppression, Wilson manages to lose sight of the constant factor: oppression. This notion Wilson applies only to the regime (mainly preindustrial) of explicit racial domination; class "subordination" is assumed as the norm for capitalist societies and therefore is not seen as problematic. To the extent that race recedes as a determinant of life chances, an irrational vestige of pre-modern society is overcome, and the social order functions normally. In spite of a perfunctory call for "public policy programs to attack inequality on a broad class front...directly confronting the pervasive and destructive features of class subordination" (p. 154), Wilson's tone suggests that progress accompanies the shift from racial to class domination. It is instructive, however, that he finds something heartening in the alleged shift. Of course, this shift is

1. His criticisms of what he refers to as "orthodox Marxist" or "economic class" theories are irremediably puerile, and the Cold War tone of the critique makes one wonder how ingenuously motivated this poor scholarship actually is (pp. 4-9).

2. It is this dichotomy that makes possible his claim that the Segregation Era was the epoch of triumph of white working class power over the planters.

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meaningful only for those blacks who are not part of the "underclass," and it is to that group that Wilson speaks.

Notwithstanding sociologistic pretensions, *The Declining Significance of Race* can be best understood as a manifesto. It is perhaps the first coherent, intellectually sophisticated ideological statement for the new black elite coming out of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements of the 1960s.[3] Wilson's message to "talented and educated blacks" is that there are available for them "unprecedented job opportunities in the growing government and corporate sectors, opportunities that are at least comparable to those of whites with equal qualifications" (p. 151). This message and the audience for whom it is intended explain a gaping hole in Wilson's construction: the absence of any role of the state apparatus and corporate bourgeoisie — the most powerful elements in American society — in the subjugation of blacks.

According to Wilson, racial domination in the preindustrial period was the system of the planters — no surprise — and that as a consequence of the institutionalization of slavery the American labor market was split very early along racial lines, thus laying the foundation for intense economic competition between black and white workers (p. 42ff). The slavery era pattern, according to which black slave labor could be employed more cheaply than white free labor, was reconstituted in the post-bellum and early industrial periods as a split labor market in which higher-paid white labor competed with lower-paid black labor. Following Bonacich, Wilson maintains that this situation is at the root of segregation, racial competition in the urban North (at least in the "industrial period") and the development of a union-based, white labor aristocracy (pp. 78-84).

In this scenario blacks and working class whites compete for economic position practically behind the backs of the corporate elite. Indeed, Wilson infers that the corporate elite actually opposed the split labor market phenomenon but — because of the separation of and competition between economy and polity, Wilson's other major antinomies — was unable to counteract its development. Not only is the corporate bourgeoisie depicted as perenially opposed to racial segmentation of the labor force, but Wilson even exonerates the Bourbon Democrats. He claims that the white working class had taken political control of the South early in this century and used that control against blacks.[4]

The state also is curiously exempted from implication in racial oppression. Because the economy and polity are separate entities and because the source of racial oppression is economic, the state apparatus (or the "political system") is seen historically as an autonomous force, external and neutral in relation to the economic sphere in general and to problems related to racial competition in particular. The state presumably wanted to mediate race relations and was inclined toward "pursuing civil rights programs." Only lower class white antagonism prevented this liberal pursuit (pp. 148-50). However, Wilson's assumption of "the state's lack of influence in the industrial sector of private industries...in the early twentieth-century North" has little historical basis.[5]

It is not surprising that the corporate and state sectors are so portrayed in Wilson's

3. I have discussed the rise of this stratum in "Black Particularity Reconsidered," *Telos* no. 39 (Spring, 1979).

4. Wilson can posit working class empowerment in the South only because his historical account conveniently ignores the South between the rise of segregation and the post-Civil Rights era. Otherwise, such an assertion would be untenable.

5. See, for example, Gabriel Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism* (New York, 1963) and James Weinstein, *The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State: 1900-1918* (Boston, 1968).

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account. These are the sectors in which the author finds greatest opportunity for "talented and educated" blacks. Of course, the benevolence — or at least neutrality — of the corporate-state nexus has long been an assumption of civil rightist black political thinking, and the assumption has been grounded typically in patronage relations with state or corporate-philanthropic agencies. This must be added to Wilson's justification of the circumstance that "Negro leaders frequently sided with management in labor disputes and counseled blacks to become strikebreakers" (p. 74). Although racial competition over jobs should by no means be discounted as related to the alliance of "Negro leaders" and anti-union management, status claims of the early black elite were contingent upon ratification within the corporate-philanthropic arena. One need only recall the connections of Booker T. Washington with the National Civic Federation and the Republican Party, the high visibility of corporate-philanthropic elements in the NAACP, and that the Urban League was founded largely to recruit strikebreakers and domestics, to wonder whether the management proclivities of black "leadership" derived from the genuine interests of the black population.

Wilson hardly deviates from the standard interpretation among the black elite. His claims that "ghetto blacks" came to determine the nature and direction of black politics in the late 1960s (pp. 136ff.) and that there was no black class structure in the South until after the Civil Rights movement validated important legitimation tools of the elite: the myth of popular origins of the present elite and its self-representation as the buffer between civil race relations and the black jacquerie. His reliance on the corporate-state for fulfillment of black aspirations is in line with a century of mainstream Afro-American political thinking. In fact, Wilson has provided an ideological tract for a section of the new elite.

There is a kernel of truth in Wilson's contentions about the new black class structure. Since the Civil Rights movement, the composition of the black elite has changed. The stratum has expanded to include all types of corporate and state functionaries — whose employment Wilson sees as evidence of the acres of diamonds of which he sings — and a fantastically enlarged complement of politicians. The latter category includes both those who hold and seek elective offices and professional protest activists. It is that group that Wilson identifies with "ghetto blacks." Yet, this element is more appropriately seen as a wing of the elite whose social funciton is management of the black population and orchestration of its adjustment to the various agendas of corporate capitalism. There is a sense, therefore, in which this element is the political vanguard of the new elite. But another segment of the black elite consists of those to and of whom Wilson speaks: the corporate and state operatives who perform non-racial functions in their organizational hierarchies. This is the group for whom race has most likely declined in significance. It is this group whose technical and professional style and non-conflictual, assimilationist orientation and values Wilson lauds as the progressive harbinger of the elite of the future. *The Declining Significance of Race* may be seen as an expression of the congealed consciousness of this stratum, now developing an independent identity within the elite.[6]

But what is the extent to which increasing size of the black elite can be read as *ipso facto* evidence of a tendency toward declining significance of race for occupational opportunity for the elite in general? After all, a large proportion — most likely a sizeable majority — of the elite makes its living off race, through protest or electoral

6. Another indication, in addition to a flood of "making it" journalism of the past half-decade or so, is appearance of the journal, *The Lincoln Review*, a black version of something like *The Public Interest* or *Commentary*.

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politics or through participation in the corporate-state affirmative action apparatus -- including black studies programs in universities. In general, race probably has increased in direct significance for black elite employment since the Brown Decision. That is a reason that so many black functionaries have reacted to Wilson's book with such emotional outrage: the very title threatens the paycheck![7] So Wilson's book, either intentionally or otherwise, may have thrown down the gauntlet for a struggle for ideological primacy within the Afro-American elite. Although his "talented and educated" blacks may be the elite of the future, the future is not yet here. One thing is certain, however: the only liberatory possibility of such a struggle is the slim chance that the two wings of the elite will de-legitimize each other and in the process democratize discourse in the black community. Otherwise, the choice is between managerial domination of the black community with a legitimating rhetoric of community of interests and racial unity or managerial domination of the black community with a legitimating rhetoric of technical competence and professionalism. It's rather like being sentenced to death in Utah: one can choose to either be hung or to be shot!

Adolph Reed, Jr.

7. The response of black protest activists to the recent uprising in Miami is noteworthy in this regard. Most could hardly restrain their elation at having a good old racial explosion to use to increase their leverage in brokering whatever frail agendas they and their organizations want to present to government and foundations.

George Konrad and Ivan Szelenyi. *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power: A Sociological Study of the Role of the Intelligentsia in Socialism.* Translated by Andrew Arato and Richard E. Allen. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1979. 252 pages. $10.00.

Konrad and Szelenyi are distinguished Hungarian sociologists. One of them is still in Hungary, the other now teaches in Australia. In this book they have made an important contribution to the discussion concerning the nature of Soviet and East European societies. Their contention is that power is now in the hands of "the class of intellectuals." They constitute the ruling class in a society based upon what they call "rational redistribution." They believe that control over the means of production, and decisions over redistribution of the surplus, belong to this class which bases its claim to that power on *knowledge*. In the West many important and influential people owe their importance and their influence to their class position, to the ownership of land or capital. They may also be educated, but their position does not decisively depend on this. The authors use a rather colorful illustration. The present head of Fiat, Agnelli, owes his position to being a capitalist. However, suppose a socialist revolution broke out in Italy tomorrow, and Agnelli were appointed to run Fiat because his *special knowledge* qualified him to do so; this would turn him into an intellectual. Of course, they recognize that there exist educated persons with little power and only a very modest claim on resources, but they still include them in the ruling "class of intellectuals;" thus even minor academics and school teachers provide legitimization and arguments for the more mighty of the land. The masses, i.e., workers and peasants, the "direct producers," are effectively

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disenfranchised. It appears that in the eyes of the authors the intellectual class not only disposes of the surplus ("rational redistribution") but also lives on it.

Let me begin with a terminological point. Why a society of *rational* redistribution? Do not the authors mean simply the opposite of spontaneous, uncontrolled, market-determined? If so, why not use a term such as "conscious" or "deliberate" or even "planned" redistribution? The word "rational" raises such questions as "rational by what criteria" or "for what purpose?" In what sense was Stalin's redistribution more (or less) rational than that of any other country or system?

The key issue is: *who* redistributes, and in whose interests? This brings one to the definition of the word "intellectual." Of course, Konrad and Szelenyi know very well the multiplicity of meanings which could attach to the word, so the question is only whether *their* definition is useful (and internally consistent). Let us now examine these matters more closely.

Who redistributes? When we speak of power, whose power are we discussing? When I tried to define the ruling stratum ("ruling order," to use their terminology) in Soviet society, I suggested that power may be seen to be vested in the group of individuals who occupy posts on the *nomenklatura* of the central committee of the Party, since they are those whom the regime itself considers to hold positions of social, economic, political or cultural influence. Viewing the Soviet system as a uni-hierarchy, or as a universal civil-and-military service, and bearing in mind the traditional-Russian *tabel' o rangov*, this amounts to defining the rulers as those above a certain *rank*. Needless to say, in the real world influence is also exerted in various ways by persons occupying lower ranks, and so there is an element of arbitrariness as to where one draws the line. But it does not seem that Konrad and Szelenyi are likely to disagree fundamentally with this definition. They will, I am sure, also agree that the vast majority of those whom they would describe as intellectuals fall outside this (or any other reasonably-defined) ruling group, or class, or "order."

This brings one back to the term "intellectual." The authors reject the old East European definition of the *intelligentsia*, i.e., persons capable of critical and independent thought. But then who are they? All "workers by brain"? All persons with a higher education? It is, of course, true that the members of the ruling group have, with few exceptions, a diploma or degree. But *"the class of intellectuals" taken as a whole* has, surely, nothing in common with the ruling stratum, with those who exercise real power and who enjoy the privileges and real-income that go with rank. In no sense can the rulers be said to represent them. In terms of income, "intellectuals" in this broad sense have lost ground substantially in comparison with workers by hand, as the following table abundantly demonstrates:

AVERAGE WAGES, USSR (RUBLES PER MONTH)

	1940	1965	1975
Industry			
Workers	32.4	101.7	160.9
Engineers and technicians	69.9	148.4	199.2
White-collar employees	36.0	85.8	126.8
Education	33.1	96.1	126.9
Administration[1]	39.0	105.9	130.6

1. "Apparatus of state and economic administration and of cooperative and social organizations." Source: *Nar.khoz.* 1975, pp. 546-547.

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Engineers and technicians earned *three times* as much as the average worker in 1940, only 24% more in 1975. Teachers now earn *much* less than the *average* industrial worker.

Exactly the same trend my be observed in Czechoslovakia:

AVERAGE WAGE PER MONTH IN CZECH CROWNS [2]

	1948	1970
Industry		
Workers	734	1902
Engineering and technical	1214	2569
White-collar employees	914	1626
Education and culture	1022	1832
Health and welfare	990	1776

Commenting on this, O. Kyn remarked: "income differentials between more and less educated people have diminished, and in some cases the relation has been reversed."[3]

We could discuss at length whether this development was due mainly to changes in the labor market or to deliberate government incomes-policy. However, this certainly does *not* support the view either that the "class of intellectuals" rules, or that those who do rule care greatly for its interests. It is *wrong* of the authors to assert that, under the Soviet system, reward is automatically guaranteed to a university education, that a qualified technologist earns more than a skilled worker, etc. In fact Soviet teachers, medical practitioners, accountants, ordinary engineers, librarians and office staff generally are paid very poorly, less than skilled workers. The lowest category of all, earning 99 roubles per month *on average* even in 1977, are those engaged in *Kul'tura*, surely in the main an intellectual occupation! Most of those employed in the above-listed categories are women, presumably because at the low pay most men choose other occupations. Whoever rules the USSR cannot be said to hold such work in very high esteem.

We can agree that the ruling stratum or class do possess higher education, but they no more "represent" the intellectuals (in the Szelenyi-Konrad definition) than army sergeants represent ordinary soldiers.

There is, also, a confused historical perspective. Let us look again at the Russia of, say, 1905. There were indeed some highly active members of the revolutionary *intelligentsia* who aimed at achieving power, on behalf of the masses to build (as they thought) a better world. They were confident that they knew better than the proletariat or peasants, who were ignorant and suffering from false consciousness, what was really good for them. They indeed possessed the features noted by Konrad and Szelenyi. These features were noted *at the time* by the Russian-Polish radical thinker Makhaisky, who surely deserves a mention in this context. Makhaisky, writing at the turn of the century, asserted that the intelligentsia was an exploiting class through its "ownership" of knowledge, *and* that revolutionary social-democracy was "the class ideology of the *intelligentsia,*" who needed the working class in order "to socialize the material means of production belonging to the bourgeoisie."[4]

2. Cf. J. Adam: *Wage, Price and Taxation Policy in Czechoslovakia* (Berlin, 1974).
3. O. Kyn, in Z. Carilliches et al., editors, *Income Distribution and Economic Inequality* (Frankfurt, 1978), p. 280.
4. Cited from S.V. Utrechin, *Everyman's Concise Encyclopaedia of Russia* (London, 1961), pp. 334.

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Let us leave aside whether Makhaisky's ideas were correct, but consider for a moment who *were* the *intelligenty* who prepared for and were active in the revolution. They were members of the *intelligentsia* in its traditional-Russian sense, critically-minded persons with education. Obviously, they would not include graduate but conformist members of the Tsarist bureaucracy. (The definition could be stretched to admit reactionary *thinkers*, such as Pobedonostsev, Dostoyevsky, Leontiev, but not high bureaucrats such as Plehve or Goremykin. Critics of the radical *intelligentsia* such as the authors of *Vekhi* were also *intelligenty*.)

The Soviet emigré thinker Boris Shragin, traces the tragic history of the critical radical *intelligentsia*.[5] The tsars sought to provide a "European" education for those whom they expected to serve their civil and military purposes. The so-called first Russian *intelligent*, Radishchev, incurred the wrath of Catherine by critical thought. Another *intelligent*, Chaadayev, set an early precedent by being committed to a mental institution by Nicholas I. In their long struggle against tsarist authority, the radical *intelligentsia* sought, after 1860, to "go to the people," but the people rejected them. Some became terrorists, others formed or joined the various revolutionary parties, and, in the end, the strains of industrialization and of war gave Lenin and his comrades their opportunity. It is true that there were hardly any workers, let alone peasants, among the Bolshevik leadership in and for some time after the October revolution.

What happened to *these* intellectuals? They were massacred, by Stalin and his henchmen. To have been an *intelligent*-Bolshevik meant almost certain death in the 1936-8 period. A new kind of leading stratum arose. One can see why. The qualities of the old *intelligentsia* were ill-adapted to the requirements of ruling, compelling, repressing, disciplining. They lacked the virtues of bureaucratic order and the ruthlessness needed to change society from above. But in addition it must never be forgotten that the radical intellectuals were largely alien to the masses, who understood little of their doctrines and were far more conservative and conventional than they. Shragin has asserted that the masses who made or supported the Russian revolution did so through a *traditionalist* revulsion against the innovations of capitalism in town and country.[6] Nowhere is this clearer than in the villages, where peasants undid most of the progressive aspects of the Stolypin reform and went back to a pre-capitalist, semi-medieval system of landholding. "The immediate needs of subaltern strata and classes are always conservative," wrote Bahro.[7] The bulk of the masses could have had little use for modernist experiments in education, art, architecture, family and morals. The party cadres promoted in and after the civil war must surely have been jealous and hostile to intellectual party members and their superior airs. Moshe Lewin has (rightly) referred to these cadres as "poorly-educated if not semi-literate...newcomers from the popular classes. 'Petty-bourgeois mentality'...soon permeated this officialdom, and all too often combined with greed and incompetence." He called them the ruling serfs."[8]

Is it reasonable to use the same term, "intellectual," both for all the Bukharins and Kamenevs, *and* for those who killed them and took their place? Were both Rubashov and Gletkin "intellectuals"? Surely *a new stratum or class came to power with Stalin,* and slaughtered their predecessors (and some of their own comrades too, of course). Konrad and Szelenyi themselves point to this change in chapter 4, but

5. B. Shragin, *Protivostoyaniye dukha* (London, 1977).
6. One sees this vividly today in Iran.
7. Rudolf Bahro, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe* (London, 1978), p. 148.
8. Robert Tucker, editor, *Stalinism* (New York, 1977), pp. 118-119.

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draw no conclusions. Their rule over the workers and peasants was particularly severe, was distinguished by an extreme disregard for the needs of the ordinary people. In my own work on Stalinism, I interpreted this as due in some considerable part to the fact that these were promoted *ex*-workers, with the characteristics of army sergeants in their relationship to their subordinates. This parallel was noted by their intellectual party victims, who used such terms as *fel'dfebelshchina*, Prishileyev, Derzhimorda (the terms refer respectively to sergeants in the tsarist army, a domineering retired corporal in a Chekhov short story and the police sergeant in Gogol's play *The Government Inspector*) to describe them. Bahro speaks of "officer mentality and the desire for stronger means of discipline" (in the 1930s this was surely a non-commissioned officer mentality.)[9] The crude, bull-necked, table-thumping party boss of Stalin's time was *not* an intellectual! If he was a bureaucrat, it was a rather special type of bureaucrat, for in those days the *modus operandi* and language were military ("fronts," "bridgeheads," "fortresses," etc., etc.), and the methods were hardly those of orderly routine.

The word "bureaucrat" may be much more applicable to the present generation of leading cadres. In spirit and in their social and educational background, they are as different from Stalin's henchmen of the thirties as these in their turn were from the revolutionary intelligentsia whom they destroyed. We seem to have no adequate term to designate their nature.

In the discussions conducted by the defeated opposition in 1928-9, especially in the letters of the very intelligent Khristian Rakovsky, an attempt is made to identify the class nature of the new rulers, who were about to kill them. There was disagreement then, as now, about the applicability of the word "class." One of the terms used was not "ruling class" but a "class of rulers" (*klass pravyashchikh*). The concept of professional rulers, bosses, who run the economy and control the redistribution process, seems to be a fruitful one. In contrast to the period of "high Stalinism," these are now reasonably well educated rulers, who co-opt to the *nomenklatura* posts a small portion of those with higher education. But "intellectuals" they surely are not, save in the sense that their educational qualifications are a precondition for their initial appointment to a junior post in the hierarchy, within which they rise for reasons largely unconnected with their intellectual prowess. A general in most armies has to have at least a higher military education (staff college, etc.), and the captain of the Oxford rugby team or the quarterback of Notre Dame has to be a student at those prestigious universities, but we could hardly describe either as intellectuals for such reasons.

Of course, it is true and important that the role of the intellectual in a Soviet-type society is different from the role he or she can play in the West. It is hard indeed not to become integrated into some official, state, party institution, there being no others. But his does not turn the intellectuals into the ruling class; it is merely further proof of the inapplicability of familiar concepts (including the word "class") to a Soviet-type society.

It is important to analyze the relationship of the ruling "order" to the rest of society, and also what it conceives of as its interests. Here it seems to me that Bahro is also at fault. In his understandable indignation concerning privilege and subordination in *real existierende Sozialismus* (actually existing socialism), he concentrates attention on the division of labor, particularly between hand and brain. Apart from the practical feasibility of universal higher education, through which he wishes to transcend (*aufheben*) this division of labor, this concept focuses attention on, so to

9. Bahro, *op.cit.*, p. 318.

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speak, the wrong place. Surely, technical change has been steadily reducing the proportion of those engaged in physical labor. Surely also the vast majority of those who earn their living by mental labor are far closer in status and in living standards to workers (who are frequently paid *more*) than they are to the ruling stratum. The Soviet emigre Belotserkovsky, a former industrial correspondent, has argued strongly that, in his experience, engineers and technicians in factories are very close to workers in origin, attitude, incomes and way of life, and that both groups see themselves as joint victims of the ruling stratum.

What interests does the ruling stratum have in common with the mass of low-ranked, and in general underpaid, intellectuals? Konrad and Szelenyi could reply that under capitalism the big capitalists have little enough in common with the smaller ones, but that nonetheless they must be seen as forming one capitalist class. But this is not a correct parallel. Both the big and the small employers share a common interest: that of making profits. The big one appropriates a larger profit, and might take over or bankrupt his smaller rival, but at least, in Marxist terms, they both advance capital in order to extract surplus value. What is the common interest of the ruling "order" and that of the class of the intellectuals as a whole? The authors suggest that it desires to maximize the size of the state budget and of the redistributable surplus. This calls for two comments. The first is that this is impossible to verify. The priority of producers' goods over consumers' goods may seem to lend support to this proposition, but this was linked with the industrialization drive. The quite considerable effort made in the last twenty years to build houses, develop food production, extend the service sector, provide consumer durables, increase pensions and minimum wages, would have to be integrated into the analysis. Do the rulers provide to the masses the minimum that is necessary to prevent rebellion, or the most that they are able to squeeze out of a rather inefficient economy? Is the glass half full or half empty? There is said to be a preference for collective as against individual consumption, but in fact the share of *social* consumption (in relation to wages or to GNP) in the USSR is similar to that in many countries of Western Europe.

A dogmatist might assert that only workers by hand create value, and that the state apparatus, the army, education, health, science, and even the specialists and white-collar staffs in productive industry, all live off the surplus generated by the working class narrowly defined. Then it would follow that these categories of persons, which includes the bulk of the "intellectuals," have the common interest of maximizing this surplus, out of which their incomes are paid. This would then lead to the view that intellectuals are economically speaking opposed to working-class interests (and natural allies of the ruling elite).

This is basically highly misleading, except for one grain of truth: given that the total consumption fund is limited in the short run, it follows that any increase in income for any large group will result in redistribution which will adversely affect other groups. Therefore it is true that, for example, if educational, medical and technological staffs received substantial raises in pay, this could well be at the expense of factory workers. But it is also the case that a (much overdue) increase in pay of shop assistants, or of workers in the food industry, or in central Siberia, would result in a redistribution of income relative to other workers, technicians, medical staffs, etc. *Any* group can only gain at the expense of others. Let us agree that many intellectuals (in the wide sense of the word) consider themselves to be underpaid, as compared with skilled workers. But this very fact demonstrates their weakness vis-a-vis the ruling stratum, which has tended to give priority to increasing incomes of

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workers (after first looking after itself, of course). Party officialdom seems deaf to the needs and demands of intellectuals. Shragin has argued that it has in fact more in common with the workers. In chapter 4 the authors themselves speak of the dangers of ossification arising from the dominance of apparatus-men with a *chinovnik* mentality. Right. But are these "intellectuals"?

But in any case is it appropriate, in an age of rapid technological change, to consider workers by brain as non-workers? Or to view Soviet teachers, doctors, nurses, librarians, as living on a surplus extracted through the exploitation of productive labor? Would the authors apply this also to firemen, school cleaners, dustmen? What has all this to do with powers of redistribution? Surely this is not how Konrad and Szelenyi see things.

The authors see in the conflict *within* the "class of intellectuals" as between *telos* and *techne*, the basic conflict in the society of so-called rational redistribution. Is this reasonable? Such a conflict exists, but surely it only affects a small portion of the intellectuals. May not other conflicts be more important? Conflicts also arise over who gets what, i.e., between sectors and areas (agriculture, the chemical industry, medicine, Uzbekistan, the Krasnoyarsk province, the navy, etc., etc.), and also who decides what (ministries, Gosplan, central committee departments, republican authorities, the Academy of Sciences, etc.), and finally also between levels and ranks of the "establishment" (e.g., ministerial officials versus managers). There is also the basic problem of retaining power and privilege vis-a-vis all subordinate strata, be they workers, peasants, junior officials or just plain intellectuals. Conflict within the ruling stratum must be reconciled behind closed doors, the appearance of unanimity must be preserved, to preserve the system from challenge from below.

A few other points. It is gong too far to claim that the Stalinist purges hit workers and peasants more than intellectuals. Millions of ordinary people *were* arrested and deported, but *proportionately* the number of victims among the Party officials, the state apparatus and the military and economic apparatus was surely far, far higher. It is also incorrect to treat Count Witte as a supporter of some kind of traditional "rational redistribution." He strove hard and long to encourage capitalism in Russia, and it was not his fault that the Stolypin reforms in agriculture were introduced so late. Then, in chapter 3, the emphasis on the (certainly very great) role of the intelligentsia in the Russian revolution causes the authors to go too far: many workers, soldiers and some peasants also took part! True, many or most of them did so under a misapprehension as to what its real outcome would or could be. But that was true also of many of the Bolshevik intellectuals!

Finally, one must respond to the basic challenge of Konrad and Szelenyi. *Is* there a ruling class? What is it, if not some species of intellectuals?

In an industrial society dominated by the fact of state ownership of the means of production, there is an objective need for hierarchy, to coordinate a complex and multi-level mass of mutually-dependent productive units. Bahro is correct in appreciating this. "Unless one is prepared to accept that the structure of regulation in interconnected production is objectively hierarchical, then the whole problem of socialist democracy can only be raised in an agitational way."[10] There is a close connection, which Konrad and Szelenyi show that they appreciate, between a centrally administered marketless economy and the unihierarchical party-state machine. With the elimination of other hierarchies and of autonomous institutions (private firms, publishing houses, parties, independent trade unions), objective

10. Bahro, *op.cit.*, p. 86.

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necessity as well as subjective or group interest leads to the creation of a society based on rank. This at least ensures the coordination of the various economic sectors and units (not *well* done, but there is no other way to do it within a centralized non-market model). I disagree strongly with Bahro's "alternative," because of its utopian character, but I agree with him about the importance of *vertical* division of labor, i.e., of subordination. If the USSR were a "meritocracy," with promotion to and through the mandarinate by intellectually-demanding examination tests, then we could possibly assert that the highest ranks were held by the upper levels of the intellectuals. But it is evidently not so. Promotion is by intrigue, through what Bahro called "chasing after higher positions," or "careerism," where the qualities of an intellectual matter little. Power makes "teleologic redistribution" possible, even without expert knowledge! Which is why it is often *not* rational!

The word "intellectual" is misleading, because, unless confined to the critical thinkers, it covers far too wide an area, and includes both some of the least privileged citizens *and* oligarchs who once studied for a diploma. I suggest we speak not of "the power of the class of intellectuals," but perhaps, again quoting Bahro, of "a ruling class organized as an ideological and administrative state apparatus," the self-perpetuating oligarchy of rank, who control the use of resources, mobilize and utilize the surplus in accordance with their economic priorities, administer, plan, co-ordinate, enforce. Is there anything better to describe them than "the ruling order"? Their power is, of course, far from absolute, being limited both by physical constraints and by social forces, as well as by the distortions engendered by the apparatus itself, well known to any student of Soviet economic planning. The Soviet ruling order, or *Klass pravyashchikh*, is not all-powerful, no one ever is. We are dealng with a ruling order or class based on rank, promotion, a new kind of non-hereditary service-nobility or *dvoryanstvo*. In chapter 2 Konrad and Szelenyi refer to the old Russian service gentry, and to "the concrete relation of domination" in Asian societies. Bahro too finds the "asian-mode-of-production" model relevant, though of course he modifies it to "fit" an industrializing despotism of the Stalin type. To govern a modern society does require certain minimum qualifications, including a diploma. So we have an educated "ruling order." But the vast majority of holders of diplomas are underprivileged, and the vast majority of holders of *nomenklatura* posts lack any claim to intellectual distinction or any interest in culture. It is astonishing to read that *the intellectuals* "make it impossible for the working class to discover its own identity in its own structural position," that they "devalue the culture of other classes," that they oppose working-class culture, for instance. Surely there is multiple confusion here. Russian present-day working-class culture is — what? It may not be their fault that it consists mainly of vodka and dominoes. If any worker aspires to poetry, music, painting, or a course in mathematics or engineering, then will he not be "learning the class culture of the intellectuals," according to Konrad and Szelenyi? What, then, do they want? To revive the excesses of *proletkult*? To regard Pushkin, Mussorgsky and Shostakovich as elitist? True enough *the "ruling order"* (and *not* "the intellectuals"), to avoid dangers to itself, tries to prevent the emergence of independent working-class consciousness and organizations. But it stamps out independent groupings or cultural manifestations of intellectuals too! Surely we must draw a sharp distinction between the "ruling order" and "intellectuals." Politically it makes much more sense for the "new left" to stress the common interests of (for instance) workers and technologists, teachers, etc., vis-a-vis the ruling order, than actually help the latter by emphasizing the divisions between them. It is a tragic aspect of East European history that there has been a deep gulf of

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mutual non-comprehensions between the intellectuals and the masses. It cannot be the task of the "new left" to make it deeper!

Finally, despite all these criticisms, I think that Konrad and Szelenyi have written a most valuable and stimulating work, with many original as well as controversial insights. For this they deserve our grateful thanks.

Alec Nove

Zdenek Mlynar. *Nightfrost in Prague: The End of Humane Socialism.* Translated by Paul Wilson. New York: Karz Publishers, 1980.

Mlynar's *Nightfrost in Prague* is an inside history of the futile struggle of Czechoslovak reform communists against Stalinism. Eastern European "socialist humanism" has been discussed often by such communist intellectuals as Markovic, Stojanovic, Schaff, Kolakowsky, Bahro and Kosik, but Mlynar has the unique perspective of an intellectual who was once in the highest ranks of a communist party. While most Eastern bloc socialist humanists are dissidents outside the state controlled domination system, Mlynar "experienced the Prague Spring inside those structures of power" and "not only saw them from up close and inside, but...also tried to reshape them" (p. 76).

Mlynar joined the Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPC) as a teenager in 1946. He was soon chosen to study law at Moscow University, where he prepared to become a "legal specialist," i.e., an obedient bureaucrat trained to follow orders by using law as a "formal means of applying and exercising power" (p. 18). The Soviet concept of law transforms Marx's legal theory, originally used to criticize capitalist society, into a prescription for Soviet society. The theory is based on the more general precept that the communist party represents the "interests of the working class." Therefore, any use it makes of power, legal or otherwise, always contributes to the general good.

Mlynar's more important lessons were learned outside the classroom, where he discovered the backward, bureaucratic and repressive aspects of Soviet life. His faith in bureaucratic centralism received another jolt when he returned home and found that these conditions had been imported to Czechoslovakia. This did not prevent him from accepting a department head position in the Office of the Public Prosecutor in Prague. But, after Khrushchev's attack on Stalin in 1956,[1] Mlynar began to examine his personal responsibility for his official activities. He decided to act more critically, but since radical reform was impossible, he chose simply to enforce existing laws strictly. Mlynar was soon forced to resign, narrowly escaping more serious punishment for pressing the complaint of a lower official against the Minister of the Interior.

1. Mlynar explains that Khrushchev (at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party [CPSU]) criticized Stalinism, but in a way that stressed Stalin's personal weaknesses as a leader, rather than pointing to structural aspects of the Soviet system that generate repression. In attacking Stalin, Khrushchev absolved the totalitarian political organization that breeds Stalinism. However, despite its shortcomings, the Khrushchev speech caused potentially critical communists to reflect on their role in the party and to think about their personal responsibility for its repressive acts. Thus, the speech helped stimulate the climate for reform, intellectually as well as politically.

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Mlynar was exiled to the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences where he studied political theory and worked until 1968. Here, removed from the party functionary's obsession with power, he absorbed non-Marxist and critical Marxist literature and eventually abandoned the unreflective, uncritical and pseudo-scientific Marxism of the party. Indeed, he concluded that party policies and ideology had little to do with Marx or any carefully thought-out concept of communism. Though Mlynar's theoretical studies contributed strongly to his personal conversion, he minimizes the role of theory in the Czechoslovak reform movement, arguing that its origins derived not from "any profound theoretical and ideological considerations, but rather from...everyday practical experience. On evaluating objectively their [the reformists] experience in production, state administration, social services, and elsewhere, they discovered that reality was essentially different from the Stalinist ideological picture of it...." (pp. 47-48).

Mlynar gradually gained access to power through writing for the CPC newspaper (*Rude pravo*) and participating in "working groups"[2] which prepared documents for party organs and apparatuses. He advocated reform ideas when the reform line was becoming more acceptable to the party leadership. Mlynar gained prestige and influence because he was a sophisticated intellectual with a practical bent able to formulate reform policies without threatening party authority. Thus, after Dubcek came to power (in early 1968), Mlynar was appointed to the CPC Central Committee secretariat.

A political realist, Mlynar advocated "centrism" which emphasized gradual, cautious reform tactics. He feared that radicals, calling for an immediate end to censorship and an equally rapid recognition of new political parties, would cause a Soviet-aided overthrow of the reform regime. Mlynar was one of the architects of the *Action Program* which outlined a plan for broad democratization of Czechoslovak society, and became the official line of the CPC during the "Prague Spring." The *Action Program* was remarkable because it designated the party as the primary coordinator in the dismantling of its own "totalitarian political dictatorship." The CPC would remain in charge until democracy was established, but with each step of the social transformation it would be stripped of some of its power. The process was to gradually develop certain attributes of bourgeois democracy: separation of powers; freedoms of assembly, association, information and travel; civil rights; and placement on merit. The rule of law (conceived as a means of justice, rather than power) was to replace the arbitrary control of the party's security forces. The *Action Program* aimed at transforming the CPC from society's planner, administrator, judge and policeman, into a means of coordinating democratic action from below. The party was to evolve from a "universal caretaker" into a catalyst for "socialist initiative."

The *Action Program* was designed to encourage mass political participation through the formation of a "National front" consisting of political parties, social organizations and interest groups. This would constitute a broad and pluralistic base for democratic planning and administration. Mlynar explains that economic reforms instituted by the Novotny regime had already partially democratized and decentralized the economy. The *Action Program* was not a mere abstraction, but an

2. The Novotny regime "demanded a higher degree of scientific management in society" (p. 57) in the 1960s. The "working groups" were supposed to bring people from outside the CPC — "from the state and economic organizations, universities and scientific institutions" (p. 57) — into social and economic planning. These groups were formed to overcome information inadequacies in the CPC organs. The technocratic plan failed because the ideas and findings of the working groups were edited to fit the power interests of the CPC.

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extension of new and effective economic policies. The projected transformation, however, was to culminate in a new social formation responsive to general needs through cooperative activity that at the same time preserved and even encouraged particularity. Centrists believed that this immense project could be completed in about ten years, without Soviet interference, if the progressive wing of the CPC maintained power, was moderate in its actions toward the USSR and if Czechoslovakia remained in the Warsaw Pact.

Numerous conditions prevented the plan's realization. One of the most important problems was Dubcek himself, who failed to take decisive measures to discourage Soviet intervention. Mlynar argues that Dubcek should have convened an extraordinary CPC congress long before the one planned for September, 1968. Had the congress been held earlier, it would have bolstered the young regime's legitimacy, clarified its goals, rationalized its tactics and reduced the number of Soviet agents and sympathizers in its offices. Thus strengthened, the regime could have taken steps to pacify the Soviets (e.g., by censorship of inflammatory rhetoric against the USSR and other Warsaw Pact allies), while at the same time strengthening ties with independent socialist nations. Dubcek's failure to initiate any of these actions early in the Prague Spring allowed the reform process to "get out of control" and contributed to the Soviet decision to intervene.[3]

Dubcek was naive and inept in his relations with the Soviets. He considered his regime a reliable ally of the USSR, but grossly misunderstood Moscow's expectations. Dubcek thought that the Soviet leadership would be satisfied with his promises, good intentions and personalistic politics. At the same time, he believed he could act independently, without heeding the Soviet Politburo's advice. Dubcek sometimes made appointments and policies inimical to Soviet interests and then failed to respond "constructively" to CPSU warnings. His primary mistake was in acting as a sovereign leader, but failing to understand that sovereignty had to be wrested from the USSR. He was incapable of handling this imposing task and misunderstood the Soviets' determination to maintain direct control of their dependents. Kadar, the Hungarian communist leader, after attempting to warn Dubcek of Soviet intentions a few days before the intervention, said at departure, "Do you *really* not know the kind of people you're dealing with?" (p. 157).

Today, Mlynar is quite critical of his own political stance in the reform period because he feels that, even if it had been executed properly by more capable leadership, centrism would not have prevented the ultimate demise of the Prague Spring. If genuine reform continued at a gradual pace, with the CPC maintaining an increasingly independent course, the USSR would probably have intervened nonetheless. According to Mlynar, internal politics conditioned and perhaps determined Soviet policy toward Czechoslovakia. Soviet "hawks" considered the reform movement another sign of weakening discipline in the Eastern bloc, and feared that Czechoslovakia would be added to the losses of China, Albania, Yugoslavia and Romania. The Czechoslovak question divided militaristic hawks from "doves" who favored diplomacy rather than military action in Soviet foreign policy. Mlynar explains how the actual decision to intervene, made by Soviet marshals while the majority of the CPSU Politburo was on summer vacation, was a central strategy in the hawks' successful effort to take control of the party. It is unlikely that a more cautious reform movement

3. The Dubcek regime would have had to have acted very early in 1968 to have deterred the Soviet plan for military intervention. Mlynar believes that the Soviets had decided already in late May, 1968, that military intervention was a reasonable option for dealing with the Czechoslovakian situation.

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could have deterred the intervention, but even if it had, the Soviets would have used sabotage and political pressure to regain control in Czechoslovakia. In a prolonged democratization, CPC members, disgruntled with the erosion of their power and perquisites, would have been especially vulnerable to Soviet offers to help restore a Moscow-controlled regime.

Mlynar now rejects centrism because the CPC could not have castrated itself, nor would the Soviet Union have allowed it — no matter how gradual the reform. Centrist policies might have prolonged the rule of the reform CPC, but at the sacrifice of the movement's radicalism. The inept Dubcek, by allowing things to "get out of control," caused the reform movement to run its full course, culminating in the mass humanistic resistance to bureaucratic centralism. Strong centrist leadership probably would have produced, at best, a Czechoslovak "Kadarization" — limited liberalization with no real alteration of the structure of domination.

Mlynar does not glorify the CPC. Instead, he describes it as a totalitarian structure manned by careerist functionaries ready to cut each other's throats when the political winds changed. The survival of party members depends upon their ability to make rapid, unreflective changes in ideology as dictated by power shifts among the cliques. Many CPC members adopted reformist positions because it was politically propitious. Mlynar explains: "I was shocked by what I was...inside the power structure. I saw how lamentably little real understanding there was of the actual aims and significance of the reform; how the skirmishes and infighting over positions of power dominated; and how easily these skirmishes eclipsed the real problems for the whole future life of society; the people in power were even changing their political colors in order to capitalize on opportunity" (pp. 90-91).

The "world of power had a hand in Prague Spring, but in reality it was a less dignified role than one might suppose from the words that were being bandied about in the press and on television" (p. 76). The reform movement was the outcome of unusual political conditions in the CPC and in the CPSU. These began with an ideological shift — the denunciation of Stalin — that was part of Khrushchev's attempt to consolidate power. Novotny, who embraced Stalinism in attaining CPC leadership, had to line up with the Kremlin in order to maintain power. Thus, he revised his public ideology, weakened the Stalinist clique within the CPC and in the process gained almost complete control of the party. The purge permitted reformist party members to rise, making it necessary for many others to adopt at least a moderately anti-Stalinist line. As a result, some important changes were instituted in Czechoslovakia long before the Dubcek regime. The growth of market mechanisms, incentives and decentralized economic planning reduced CPC control of the economy and generated pressure from below for placement on professional qualificaiton, self-management and worker participation in planning. The conservative Novotny eroded unwittingly the economic base of the dictatorship and elevated reformists into positions of power.

After Novotny was overthrown by the reformists, Brezhnev rejected his request for help, on the ground that the putsch was an "internal" matter of the CPC. In reality, all high level changes in the Eastern block must have at least the tacit approval of the USSR. Brezhnev was actually delighted that Novotny had been deposed because he was still struggling to consolidate power and wanted the remains of the Khruschev clique removed. Novotny had not only solidified his rule on the basis of the Khruschev line, but became so committed to it that he was foolish enough publicly to criticize Brezhnev's removal of Khruschev. Ironically, Brezhnev tolerated Dubcek's rise, hoping that he would be a more reliable ally than Novotny. The reformists gained control in

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Czechoslovakia because of power struggles within the CPC and CPSU, *not* as a result of a widespread conversion of CPC members to socialist humanism. The socialist humanist mobilization "below" was possible only because conditions "above" permitted.

Mlynar describes the August 20th intervention vividly, capturing the surreal presence of the "allied" troops in Prague. Dubcek's response to the debacle — "So they did it after all — and to *me*!' (p. 146); "If they have something against me, why don't they deal with me directly?" (p. 147) — was naive and personalistic. He and many other Czechoslovaks felt that there must have been "some kind of misunderstanding!" Prior to the intervention, rumors of possible Soviet aggression were fuled by daily anti-reform diatribes in the Soviet press. However, most Czechoslovaks did not take the threats seriously and Dubcek himself failed to report to the CPC presidium a warning letter he received from Brezhnev three days before the intervention. Czechoslovaks simply did not consider the reform movement a retreat from either socialism or the Warsaw alliance. Furthermore, Soviet accusations about American and West German interference in Czechoslovakia seemed preposterous. Thus, the initial reaction to the intervention was one of surprise and betrayal, but these feelings were soon modified and redirected into a unified, mass, peaceful resistence. Mlynar compares the successful resistance to "an elephant who couldn't crush a needle. . . not only was the needle invulnerable, but the elephant was, after all, rather large, and some kind of solution for the impasse had to be found" (p. 209).

The Soviets attempted to orchestrate a putsch in the CPC to install a Moscow controlled "revolutionary peasants' and workers' government." The reform faction of the CPC not only prevented the putsch, but was also successful at staging an extraordinary party congress (during the first days of the occupation) that endorsed the politics of the Dubcek regime, elected reform candidates to all party levels and condemned the Soviet intervention. Since they faced mass resistence, the Soviets chose to bring the CPC leadership to Moscow to "negotiate" a settlement of the crisis.

The CPC delegation included both the staunch reform wing (who had been interned by the KGB) and Soviet sympathizers who were to have constituted the quisling regime that never materialized. Although they lacked unity, the entire CPC leadership understood that they would have to capitulate or be responsible for the ensuing bloodshed. It was clear from the start that they would not leave Moscow until they signed "the death sentence for democratic communist reform in Czechoslovakia" (p. 244).

The account of the "Moscow Protocol" meetings emphasizes the dominating role of naked power interests and captures the futility of the reform movement. The reform faction, as they were being forced to sign away their efforts, values and the trust of their people, somehow comforted themselves with the fiction that they were preserving some of the reformist gains. In reality, they saved only their positions, and only temporarily. This Soviet "concession" permitted them to participate in the initial stages of the "normalization," which destroyed all they had worked to build and paved the way for the more repressive Husak regime which soon replaced them. Mlynar saw his role in the "negotiations" as an appropriate culmination of his CPC career. For him, party membership was an abrogation of moral agency, an abandonment of all loyalties (except to the party) and a contract for blind obedience. Therefore, the Moscow Protocol was the party reminding him once more of his commitment — "Well, what's it going to be? Are you with us for 'eternity' or not?" (p. 232).

The ceremonial signing of the protocol in a closed meeting provided a fascinating interchange between the CPC and CPSU. Brezhnev opened the session in a "shame-

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lessly jovial tone," presenting a cliché-filled statement about fraternal relations in the socialist bloc, "revanchist" threats to its security and the eternal friendship of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. In response, Dubcek improvised an emotional, but articulate, denunciation of the Soviet intervention that defended the *Action Program* and the reform CPC. Brezhnev responded angrily, but without the usual ideological twaddle. Clichés were replaced by terms expressing succinctly the concrete power interests of the Soviet Union. Brezhnev spoke like an imperial potentate scolding the proconsuls from a rebellious province. He told Dubcek, "I believed in you, and I stood up for you against the others. Our Sasha is a good comrade, I said. And you disappointed us all so terribly" (p. 239). Brezhnev explained that it is the duty of the Soviet Union to protect the socialist bloc, meaning that the CPSU has the *right* to participate in and even direct the internal affairs of its "allies." He implied that the intervention was necessary because the reform regime had not respected this right. The specific problem was not the reform per se, but the failure of the CPC to seek Moscow's approval for high level appointments or to heed its "advice" in other matters. Dubcek simply did not consult his superiors, nor did he obey their orders. Brezhnev emphasized the sacrifices of the Soviet Army and the enormous hardships endured by the Soviet people during WWII. Since the postwar division of Europe was established at great costs to the USSR, the CPSU considers itself responsible for protecting these borders "for eternity." According to Brezhnev, President Johnson had recently reaffirmed the results of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences, implicitly recognizing the Soviet right to intervene in Eastern Europe. Johnson allegedly told Brezhnev that "as far as Czechoslovakia and Romania are concerned it [the American government] recognizes them [the rights implied by Yalta and Potsdam] without reservation; in the case of Yugoslavia, it would have to be discussed." Brezhnev then exhorted the Czechoslovak delegation, "So what do you think will be done on your behalf? Nothing. There will be no war" (p. 241). The Soviet position was that "during the war our soldiers fought their way to the Elbe, and that is where our real Western borders are today" (p. 241).

Brezhnev's view of the intervention was simple. The Dubcek regime acted independently and for that reason could no longer be relied upon. The Soviets then acted to protect the integrity of their borders. However, Brezhnev added, "It is immaterial whether anyone is actually threatening us or not," Soviet troops have a right to be in Czechoslovakia, "and that is how it will be, from the Second World War until 'eternity' " (p. 240). Finally, he explained the folly of reform communism — it adopts a model of socialism for the whole of Europe that fails to take account of the real borders that divide Europe. He concluded, "What does a Berlinguer amount to? Does he have any tanks? Can he alter the results of the Second World War?" (p. 241).

Despite the failure of the Czechoslovak reform movement, Mlynar feels that the Prague Spring has had positive historical consequences. Although he emphasizes the importance of initiatives from above, he also recognizes that the human significance of Prague Spring was what happened below. After the CPC leadership reduced "the fear" by easing its totalitarian rule, "democratic humanitarian consciousness came forward as the main protagonist in the Prague Spring" (p. 118). Czechoslovak society was subjected to an immanent critique from the perspective of its "humanistic, democratic value system" (p. 118). A euphoria for democratic socialist reform swept CPC members into solidarity with the masses. Though the movement produced only a brief respite from repression, it left behind a record of what could occur were the fear permanently removed.

On the whole, Mlynar's arguments have depressing implications for communist

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reform. Yet, they still hold some hope for the future. He hints that beneath the repressive social structures lie humanistic, democratic values which could again become the basis of a mass movement if political conditions permitted. These subterranean values are not mysterious. They are simply reactions to the concrete modes of domination and the real threat of terror that pervade everyday life in Czechoslovakia.

Mlynar's book suggests that totalitarian domination generates a practical emancipatory critique. But for the critique to become a social movement or even to stimulate widespread public discussion, the harshest repression must be lifted. Even if this occurs, a communist reform movement still must be protected from the reactionary tendencies of party functionaries who fear real democracy because it puts society outside their control (Mlynar explains that the "Hungarian events" are still in the memory of party members; "the quite concrete image of a lynch mob hanging Communists from lampposts" [p. 42]). Finally, genuine reform can occur only if the Russians moderate their stance toward their Eastern allies. Such a transformation requires broad changes inside the Soviet power structure, as well as in its relations with the West. Brezhnev was speaking realistically, in his Moscow Protocol diatribe, when he said that "You are counting on the Communist movement in Western Europe, but that won't amount to anything for fifty years" (p. 241).

Nightfrost in Prague is a credible autobiographical account of the Czechoslovak reform movement. It is enhanced by Mlynar's criticism of his own centrist position, his willingness to accept responsibility for his errors and his apparent caution in recounting past events. The portrayals of minor events capture the surreal climate of totalitarian rule: Novotny's wife purchasing the bedclothes and china tea service of a political opponent her husband had executed; the elite Soviet soldiers holding the CPC leadership at gunpoint, while eating the scraps of food left over by their hostages; the Soviets sending a prostitute to Mlynar's bedroom during the Moscow protocol "negotiations" who asks "Is there anything more you'd like, comrade?" (p. 231); and Mlynar, in a bathroom immediately after his expulsion from the party, asking his prosecutor, who was standing at the next urinal, "Are we giving you a lot of work?" and receiving the reply "Got three more today" (p. 259).

Mlynar develops a sophisticated critique of both Stalinist orthodoxy and of the illusory promises of reform communism. His criticism of the latter, however, focuses primarily on the political errors of the reform movement, and does not elaborate the problems associated with technocratic planning and bureaucratic management. One element of the reform critique was that patrimonial bureaucracy should be transformed into a meritocratic structure in which experts, placed according to merit, have increased responsibility for social and economic planning. Scientists organized into "working groups," specializing in specific problem areas, were supposed to join the political leadership in rationalizing the planning process. Mlynar advanced in the CPC bureaucracy on the basis of his technocratic skills, and was thus equipped to provide a sharper analysis of technocratic planning than he does. Possibly the reform leaders were as naive about this matter as they were about the Soviets. Mlynar claims that the CPC leadership did not really understand democracy, nor could they have lived with its social and political consequences. Had he probed the issue of planning deeply he might have explained more clearly how the leadership could harmonize reform ideas with their desire to maintain power. Yet, Mlynar is not a closet technocrat. Moreover, the issue of bureaucracy is not the focus of this book. His work is an important and engaging account of "hostages in the hands of gangsters."

Robert J. Antonio

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CURRENT ISSUE #8 (April, 1980)

M. Brian Murphy and **Alan Wolfe**, *Democracy in Disarray*
Paul Johnston, *Democracy, Public Work and Labor Strategy*
Dudley Burton and **M. Brian Murphy**, *Planning, Austerity and the Democratic Prospect*
Zillah Eisentein, *The State, the Patriarchal Family, and Working Mothers*
Ronald H. Chilcote, *Perspectives of Class and Political Struggle in the Portuguese Capitalist State*

BACK ISSUES STILL AVAILABLE

13 **BOLOGNA:** Class Composition and the Theory of the Party; **KOSIK:** Our Present Crisis **COLLETTI:** Theory of the Crash; **ARONSON:** The Roots of Sartre's Thought; **SOLOMON** Marx and Bloch; **PIANA:** History and Existence in Husserl; **SINELNIKOV:** Early Marxis Critiques of Reich

14 **JACOBY:** Negative Psychoanalysis and Marxism; **TRONTI:** Workers and Capital; **COHEN:** Weber and the Dynamics of Domination; **ROVATTI:** Fetishism and Economic Categories; **SCHROYER:** Marx's Theory of Crisis; **HOFFMAN:** Bukharin's Theory of Equilibrium; **BUCK-MORSS:** The Dialectic of T.W. Adorno

17 **CARLO:** Lenin on the Party; **JACOBY:** Laing, Cooper and the Tension in Theory and Therapy; **ROVATTI:** Critique of Fetishism in the Grundrisse; **D'AMICO:** Coupures of Structuralism; **TRONTI:** Social Capital; **FRANKEL, MARTIN:** The Budapest School; **HEGEDUS, MARKUS:** Modernization and Alternatives

18 **ARATO:** Re-examining the Second International; **GEORGE:** Forgetting Lenin; **HOWARD:** Re-reading Luxemburg; **SANDERS:** A Social Theory of Literature; **GOLDMANN:** Sociology of the Novel; **CAVALCANTI, FERNANDES:** A Dialogue; **GORZ:** Their Factories, Our People; **PATOCKA:** On Scientific Conscience

19 **ADORNO:** Theses against Occultism; **ADORNO:** The Stars Down to Earth; **HABERMAS:** On Social Identity; **LIEHM:** Kott: Beyond Shakespeare and Euripides; **LYOTARD:** Adorno as the Devil; **ZUKIN:** The Case of the Belgrade Eight; **SOLOMON:** Beethoven and the Sonata Form; **M. SOLOMON:** Beethoven and Enlightenment

20 **FEKETE:** The New Criticism; **ADORNO:** Lyric Poetry and Society; **JAY:** The Frankfurt Critique of Mannheim; **ARONSON:** The Ultimate Sartre? **CARLO:** Redefining Imperialism; **HOWARD:** In Memory of Mallet; **GIRARDIN:** Reading Baudrillard; **ROSS:** Books on the Cultural Revolution; **FOGEL:** Review of Wakeman's 'History and Will'

21 **CARLO:** Socio-Economic Nature of the USSR; **SCHMIDT:** Politics of Epistemology; **BLOCH:** Causality and Finality; **ARATO:** Neo-Idealist Defense of Subjectivity; **KRAHL:** Adorno's Political Contradiction; **SCHMIDT:** Reply to Jay; **SCHIEVELBUSCH:** Industrialized Traveler; **FEENBERG:** The Sugarland Express; **ZERZAN:** Revolt against Work

22 **HOWARD:** Introduction to Lefort; **LEFORT:** What Is Bureaucracy? **BAPTISTA:** Bureaucracy and Society; **DI NORCIA:** Critical Theory and Ecology; **DAHMER:** Brecht and Stalinism; **JAY:** Answer to Schmidt; **SVITAK:** Czech Socialist Democracy; **POSTONE REINICKE:** Nicolaus and the Grundrisse; **KEANE, SINGER:** Reply to Postone and Reinicke

23 **JACOBY:** Politics of the Crisis Theory; **LIEHM:** Kafka in Eastern Europe; **KOSIK:** Hasek and Kafka; **SCHOOLMAN:** Marcuse's Second Dimension; **HOWARD:** Introduction to Castoriadis; **CASTORIADIS:** An Interview; **LIEHM:** Intellectuals on the New Social Contract; **LOOMAN:** Reply to Zerzan; **ALT:** Reply to Zerzan and Looman; **POSTER:** Desanti's 'Les Staliniens'

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BACK ISSUES STILL AVAILABLE

24 **SCHMIDT:** Lukacs' Concept of Bildung; **HABERMAS:** Moral Development and Ego Identity; **MARRAMAO:** Political Economy and Critical Theory; **ULMEN:** Wittfogel's Science of Society; **WINFIELD:** The Dilemma of Labor; **D'AMICO:** Comments on Social Amnesia; **COHEN:** False Premises; **MORRIS:** From Liblice to Kafka

26 **GOULDNER:** Revolutionary Intellectuals; **KORSCH:** 10 Theses on Marxism; **BREINES:** Korsch's Road to Marx; **MATTICK:** Anti-Bolshevist Communism in Germany; **KELLNER:** Korsch's Historicism; **CEPPA:** Korsch's Marxism; **NEGT:** Constitution in Korsch; **MARRAMAO:** Crisis and Constitution; **CERUTTI:** Hegel, Lukacs and Korsch; **MARRAMAO:** Korsch in Italy; **WINFIELD:** On 'The Young Hegel'

28 **DE MASI, MARRAMAO:** Councils and State in Weimar; **KOVANDA:** Czech Workers' Councils; **ALT:** Beyond Class; **BLOMSTER:** Sociology of Music; **ADORNO:** The Missa Solemnis; **BERNOW, RASKIN:** Ecology of Scientific Consciousness; **ARONOWITZ, JACOBY, PICCONE, SCHROYER:** Symposium on Class; **ZERZAN:** Unionism and the Labor Front; **PETRAS:** The Myth of U.S. Capitalism's Decline

30 **CASTORIADIS:** On the History of the Workers' Movement; **BONACCHI:** The Council Communists; **KOVEL:** Therapy in Late Capitalism; **POSTER:** Freud's Concept of the Family; **PATOCKA:** Wars of the 20th Century; **SIEBERT:** Horkheimer's Sociology of Religion; **HEARN:** Toward a Critical Theory of Play; **ENZENSBERGER:** On the Petty Bourgeoisie; **LEFORT:** An Interview

32 **FEHER, HELLER:** Forms of Equality; **DAHMER:** Psychoanalysis as Social Theory; **BENJAMIN:** Adorno's Social Psychology; **ADORNO:** Music and Technique; **MARKUS:** The Young Lukacs and Culture; **JAY:** Totality in Lukacs and Adorno; **GRAMSCI:** Notes on Journalism; **FOUCAULT:** An Interview; **JAY:** Considerations on Western Marxism

25 **RUSCONI:** Marxism in West Germany; **MUELLER, NEUSUESS:** The Illusion of State Socialism; **HABERMAS:** Reply; **OFFE:** Comments on Mueller and Neusuess; **MESZAROS:** Phases in Sartre's Development; **LENHARDT:** Anamnestic Solidarity; **RADNOTI:** Bloch and Lukacs; **LANDMANN:** Bloch in Korcula 1968

27 **MARCUSE:** On the Problem of the Dialectic; **FEKETE:** Northrop Frye; **RUSCONI:** Korsch's Political Development; **SANTAMARIA, MANVILLE:** Lenin and the Transition; **ELSHTAIN:** Social Relations in the Classroom; **WINFIELD:** The Logic of 'Capital'; **JACOBY:** Falling Rate of Intelligence? **ZERZAN:** Unionization in America; **FERRAROTTI:** Struggle against Bureaucracy; **SOLOMON:** On Beethoven

29 **CASTORIADIS:** The Hungarian Source: **LEFORT:** Age of Novelty; **LEFORT:** Presenting Merleau-Ponty; **MERLEAU-PONTY:** Philosophy since Hegel; **SILVERMAN:** Re-reading Merleau-Ponty; **DALLMAYR:** Marxism and Truth; **FEHER ET AL.:** Notes on Lukacs 'Ontology'; **GABEL:** Utopian and False Consciousness; **LANDMANN:** The Critique of Reason; **JACOBY:** Review of Braverman's 'Labor and Monopoly Capital'

31 **CARLO:** The Oil Crisis; **PICCONE:** From Spaventa to Gramsci; **ADLER:** Gramsci and the Industrialists; **RUTIGLIANO:** Gramsci and Rationalization; **BALDAN:** Gramsci as a Historian; **ADORNO:** The Actuality of Philosophy; **HELLER:** On the New Adventures of the Dialectic; **KOVANDA:** Czechoslovakia in Transition; **FRIEDRICH:** On Brecht and Eisenstein

33 **LEE:** Contradictions of Politicization in China; **PAGGI:** Gramsci's Theory of Marxism; **SCHMIDT:** Kosik's Political Theory; **KOSIK:** Dialectic of Morality; **RYBALKA ET AL.:** Nouvelle Philosophie; **JAN:** Notes on Socialist Planning and its Discontents; **BERMAN:** Theater Workshop in Bergamo; **CARLO, MELOTTI:** In Memory of Bruno Rizzi

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BACK ISSUES STILL AVAILABLE

34 **GOULDNER:** Stalinism as Internal Colonialism; **CASTORIADIS:** French Leftists; **JACOBY:** Politics of Objectivity; **CARLO:** Imperialism, Monopoly, Inflation; **SIEBERT:** Fromm's Theory of Religion; **NEGT:** Misery of Democracy in Germany; **ZIPES:** Berufsverbot and Terrorism; **ZUKIN:** On Self-Management; **BERMAN:** Adorno, Marxism, Art; **GROSS:** On Irony

36 **BOOKCHIN:** Beyond Neo-Marxism; **LEFORT:** Then and Now; **BOBBIO:** Why Democracy? **GEORGE:** On Contradiction; **CARLO:** Capitalism and Crisis in Yugoslavia; **DAHMER:** Sexual Economy Today; **GROSS:** Culture and Negativity; **MONGIN:** Questining Politics; **HOWARD:** 'Esprit'

38 **CARLO:** Unemployment; **CASTORIADIS:** The Social Regime in Russia; **KONRAD, SZELENY:** Intelligentsia and the Social Structure; **LEVI:** Sources of Wittgenstein's Ethics; **ADORNO:** Metacritique of Epistemology; **VAJDA:** Lukacs' and Husserl's Critique of Science; **SALVADORI:** Eurocommunism; **MARCUSE ET AL.:** Theory and Politics; **HELLER:** Marxist Ethics and Eastern Europe

40 **ZASLAVSKY:** Rebirth of the Stalin Cult in the USSR; **FEHER:** Kadarism as the Model State of Khrushchevism; **NERI:** The Czech Crisis; **WHITEBOOK:** Nature in Habermas; **COHEN:** Why More Political Theory? **ADLER:** Thalheimer, Bonapartism and Fascism; **THALHEIMER:** On Fascism; **KLARE:** Law-Making as Praxis; **TERTULIAN:** On the Later Lukacs

42 **ZASLAVSKY:** The USSR and the Working Class; **MLYNAR:** From Prague to Moscow; **FEHER:** Toward a Post-Machiavellian Politics; **CARLO:** The Italian Crisis and the Left; **CLARK:** Marx, Bakunin and Social Transformation; **RAULET:** Remarks on Horkheimer's Pessimism; **COLLETTI:** The Three Faces of Italian Communism; **BERMAN:** German Notes; **LOHMANN:** Society versus the State; **SARTRE ET AL.:** Discussion

35 **BOBBIO:** Is There a Marxist Theory of the State? **BOBBIO:** Alternatives to Representative Democracy; **FEHER:** Dictatorship over Needs; **PICCONE:** Crisis of One Dimensionality; **LUKE:** The Age of Artificial Negativity; **ARATO:** Bureaucratic Centralism; **D'AMICO:** Desire and the Commodity Form; **ADORNO:** On the Social Situation of Music; **ADORNO:** Resignation

37 **KOVEL:** Rationalization and the Family; **MILLER:** Nietzsche and Marx; **EWENS:** Americanized Consumption; **TSCHIRHART:** Chinese Asexuality; **RADNOTI:** Benjamin's Politics; **TRAUB:** Lenin and Taylor; **ADORNO:** Culture and Administration; **BOELLA:** Radicalism and Needs in Heller

39 **HABERMAS:** History and Evolution; **HONNETH:** Adorno and Habermas; **SCHMIDT:** Offensive Critical Theory? **REED:** Black Particularity Reconsidered; **ROELOFS:** The Warren Court and Corporate Capitalism; **FEHER:** Lukacs in Weimar; **BEILHARZ:** Trotsky's Marxism — Permanent Involution? **BIRO:** The Plan to Film 'Capital'; **HABERMAS:** Capitalism and Democracy: An Interview

41 **BOOKCHIN:** Self-Management and Technology; **FINOCCHIARO:** Gramsci's Crocean Marxism; **WILDT:** Totalitarian State Capitalism; **BOELLA:** Eastern European Societies; **STOJANOVIC:** Democratization in Yugoslavia; **RITTERSPORN:** Conflict in the USSR 1936-38; **WOLIN:** On Adorno's Aesthetische Theorie; **HEYDORN:** Gustav Landauer

43 **CARLO:** The Crisis of Bureaucratic Collectivism; **COBLER:** The Determinate Assertion of Normalcy; **WOLIN:** An Aesthetic of Redemption; **CASTORIADIS:** Socialism and Autonomous Society; **McNALL:** Greece and the Common Market; **MAHAIRA-ODONI:** Reply to McNall; **ADORNO:** Music and the New Music; **ZASLAVSKY:** Why Afghanistan? **GREFFRATH ET AL.:** Conversations with Wittfogel; **MELOTTI:** Socialism and Bureaucratic Collectivism

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